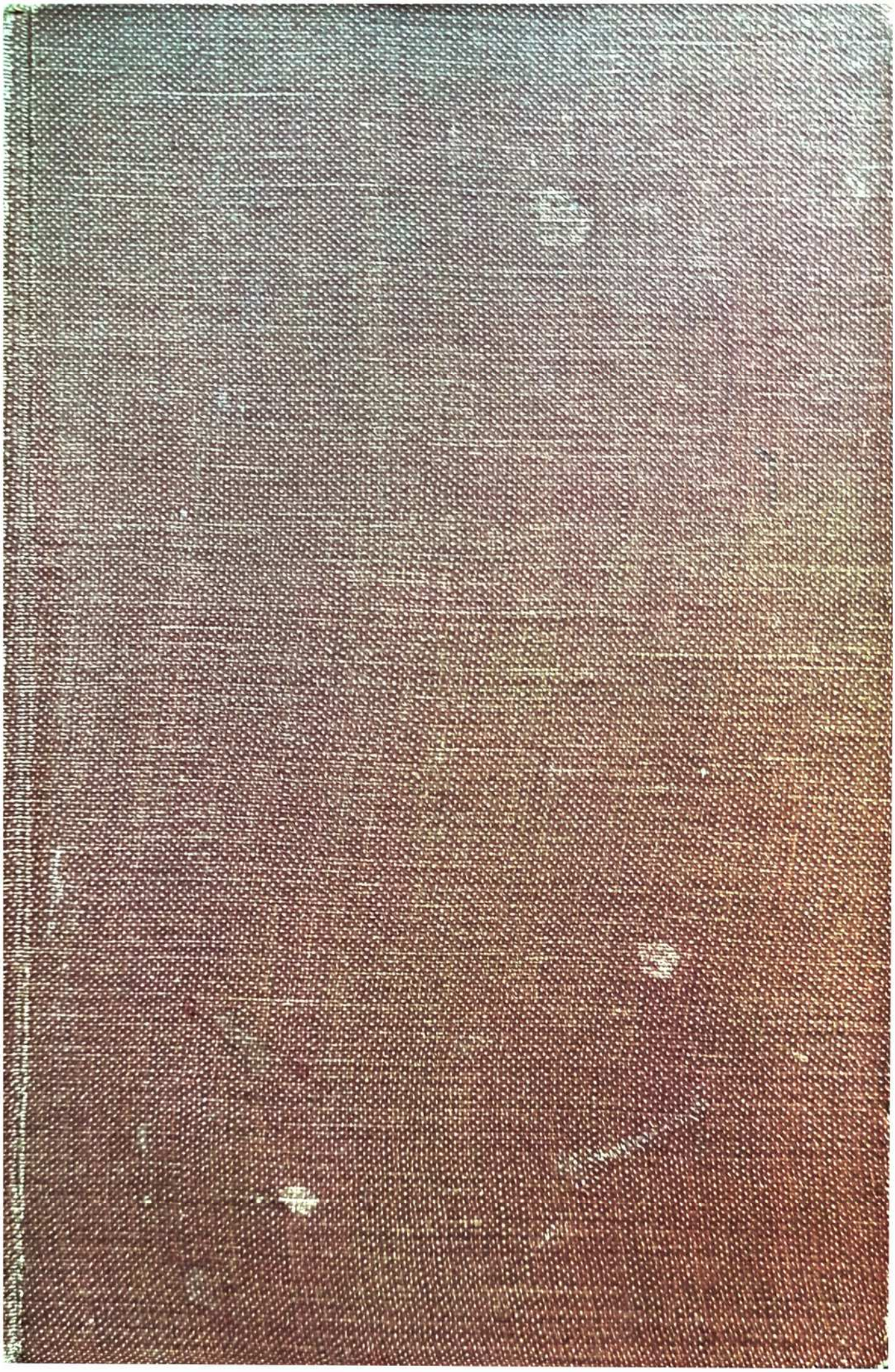

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STORIES TWICE TOLD

CHILDREN'S ADDRESSES FROM "THE MORNING WATCH"

BY THE LATE

REV. J. P. STRUTHERS, M.A.

GREENOCK

AUTHOR OF "THE WORD AND THE ROAD"
"PILGRIM CHEER," ETC.

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS ON ART PAPER

SECOND IMPRESSION

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"And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father."—*Genesis* xxvi. 18.

Printed in Great Britain

Preface

THIRTY-SIX years ago the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church asked my husband to undertake the writing of a little magazine for its young people. He felt the work was laid on him, and he took it up at God's bidding.

His own childhood's home had been singularly lacking in story-books, and he never forgot the joy which a little monthly missionary magazine for children, introduced into the home by a kind friend, brought to him. From that time he always had the wish to write a little paper for children, filled with stories and pictures—a wish that years after was fulfilled in the writing of the "Morning Watch."

Its twenty-seven volumes are now out of print, and it has been asked that some of their contents should be reproduced.

In 1894 my husband wrote: "I was in a house on Friday and found people reading a volume of the United Presbyterian Half-penny Missionary Magazine, forty-four years old! I used to read it long ago and loved it dearly. I wonder if anyone will read *ours* forty-four years after this! I hope so." These words seem to warrant the reprinting of a volume of selections. If it finds favour another may follow, for the well is deep.

I think for it the most fitting "Foreword"

is the message that is printed on the first page of the first volume of the "Morning Watch," 1888:

"God is love, and that man might know that love, the love of the Persons of the Godhead for Each Other and the love of All of Them for us, has been God's everlasting wish, and it should be ours. And we shall count ourselves happy if we can help any who may read our little paper to make God's thoughts their thoughts and His ways their ways; to believe that there is simply nothing God will not do for them, and nothing they may not do for Him, if only they seek the glory of His Son, standing with their loins girt and their lamps burning, patient, brave and cheerful, waiting, looking for the Lord."

A. L. S.

Greenock, 1923

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Alexander the Great

ALEXANDER, the first of men to be called "The Great," was the son of Philip, king of Macedon, and his wife Olympias, and was born in the year 356 before Christ. Philip was a man of wonderful ability. His young son used to say, "My father will leave me nothing to do," but the son lived to do even greater things than the father had done. He was carefully educated, having for his tutor from his thirteenth to his sixteenth year, "the three best years of his life," no less a man than Aristotle, one of the wisest men who ever lived. Alexander carried with him through all his wars a copy of Homer's Iliad which Aristotle had given him.

He fought his first battle when he was eighteen. The Thebans and Athenians were at war with the Macedonians, who were led by Philip. It was the son's bravery that won the day. There was a body of Theban soldiers, 300 strong, called the Sacred Band, all young men chosen from the best families, and so arranged in battle that every man had an intimate friend standing next to him. Alexander charged them, but they refused to quit their post, and were all cut to pieces. The famous orator Demosthenes was one of the Athenians who fought that day. "My son," said Philip, embracing him after the battle, "seek for thyself another kingdom, for that which I leave is too small for thee."

Within two years Philip was assassinated, and Alexander became king. Shortly after, he was proclaimed head of the Greek people. It was at this time he went to see Diogenes, who had refused to come to see him. He was the philosopher who lived in a tub. Alexander found him basking in the sun. "Can I do anything to serve you?" he asked. "Yes," said the philosopher, "if you would stand out of my sunshine."

In April, B.C. 334, Alexander left Europe never to return. He crossed the Hellespont, steering the ship himself, and when near the shore hurled his spear to show that he claimed Asia for his own. It was his father Philip's purpose he thus sought to carry out, but, without meaning it, he was fulfilling the decree of God; for, 200 years before, the prophet Daniel had foretold that a he-goat should come from the west and destroy the ram with two horns that represented the kingdom of Media and Persia. "And the rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king." Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that Alexander visited Jerusalem, and was shown these words by the High Priest.

He took with him 30,000 foot soldiers and 4,500 cavalry, and with this little army set out to conquer Asia. Before leaving home he had distributed most of his property amongst his friends, and, being asked what he had kept for himself, replied, "My hopes." But, however great these may have been, they were surely more than surpassed.

In the west of Asia, first of all, army after army fled, and province after province was captured. In Phrygia he came to the town of Gordium, where was a famous waggon, whose pole was fastened by an intricate knot of bark. It was an old saying that the man who could undo the knot should be king of Asia. Alexander cut it with his sword.

In B.C. 333 he defeated Darius himself, the Persian king, who had an army of half a million men, and then marching south destroyed Tyre. Egypt next submitted, and there, B.C. 331, he founded the city of Alexandria, which from that time till almost our own day became the centre of commerce between the East and West. The same year he defeated Darius again and finally, and so became master of the Persian Empire. Four years later he crossed the Indus and entered India, having conquered everyone but himself. His marvellous success, for he was scarcely thirty, had filled him with pride. Forgetting his own father's miserable history he gave way to drunkenness and every kind of wickedness. He imagined himself a god, and wore on his coins the horns of a ram on his head, as if he were the son of Jupiter Ammon ! It was at this time he slew Clitus, a friend who had saved his life in battle. It was a night of revelry, and Alexander was decrying his father Philip's deeds. Clitus stood up for Philip's honour. " This hand," he cried, " saved your life at the Granicus ; listen to the truth, or else invite to your suppers none but barbarians and slaves." Alexander's rage was

now beyond all bounds. His attendants had put his dagger out of his reach, his officers tried to hold him back, but he dashed them aside, snatched a pike out of the hands of one of his guards, and thrust it through his friend, saying, "You can go now to Philip."

The lesson was soon forgotten, and Alexander went on in sin. His soldiers were wearying to get home, and forced him to turn westwards. Reaching Babylon, B.C. 324, he busied himself receiving embassies and planning new conquests. First he would subdue Arabia, then, one by one, the remaining nations of the earth. For he was still young, and life seemed all before him.

But the end came like a thief in the night. Two days' drunkenness brought on fever. He tried to shake it off, talking and playing dice with his generals, and rising each day to bathe and offer sacrifice, but the ninth day saw the end. He was asked to whom he left the kingdom, and having answered, "To the strongest," became speechless and soon after passed away. He died on the afternoon of 28th June, B.C. 323, aged 32 years and 8 months.

But his influence did not pass away, and never will. Alexander the Great had a hand in shaping the destiny of every one of us. He lived just after the prophet Malachi had written the last book of the Hebrew Scriptures. But it was necessary for the preaching of the Gospel among all nations that the New Testament should be written in Greek, and but for Alexander that never would have been. It was his conquests,

the cities and kingdoms he founded, the soldiers he left behind him, the highways for trade he opened up, that brought the Greek language and Greek thought into Palestine.

Old Rufus

RUFUS left home three weeks ago last Saturday night. We have not seen him since and I fear he must be dead.

Rufus was only a cat, but I was his master, and he was my friend for more than ten years. He was very little and very helpless when I got him. He was my second cat, the first one being his elder brother. Him I had six weeks or so, and I called him Rufus because he was red. The person who gave him to me brought him in a little box which she had lined with pink.

His coverlet was of cretonne, and at the head of his bed she had placed a watch that he might know when to lie down at night! He died, and his brother, who was more white than red, coming in his place, succeeded to his estate, which consisted of the bed, the coverlet, the watch, daily bread and milk, and porridge, with occasional fish and flesh, and an extra dainty on the Sabbath day; with the whole world to roam in:

> "A heritage, it seems to me,
> A king might wish to hold in fee."

With the estate he succeeded to the title, and so became Rufus II, and well he answered to his name. One evening at worship I specially remember; on those days he was never absent from it, morning or evening; he seemed to be

taken with the singing. On this particular evening he was stretched out on the rug, and I thought he was asleep. We were reading the last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and had reached the 13th verse : " Salute Rufus, and his mother and mine." I read it quietly like the other verses, but had no sooner said, " Salute Rufus," than, poor creature, he uttered a little cry, and stretched his legs and looked up wistfully.

I anticipated a great future for him after that, but I had little experience then. He turned out to be no genius after all ; and perhaps had even less than ordinary cats' ability, and much less than their usual affection. But he did his best I think. And once he came to the prayer meeting in the church. He heard my voice, and I knew the tinkling of his little bell, but the laughter of some children scared him, and he never ventured back again. Ah, how many folk I know who have never ventured even once !

He grew sedater as he grew older, and I took away his bell. Yet now and again, to the very last, he had little bursts of friskiness and merriment. Every stranger he had to interview, and some, I know, he dearly loved. But as is the manner of us Scots, he was not demonstrative.

On rare occasions he would lick my hand, six times a year or so, but evidently chiefly because he feared I misjudged him. Poor Rufus ! I wish you could have said as much for me as I gladly say of you. I know you judged me and had good reason too. And many a time those eyes of

yours reproved me, and sometimes they kept me from doing wrong. I wish I could have said good-bye to you. I wish I had you back one minute even, and I would beg your pardon for many things I did, many a thought, and word, and look.

But you will pay as little heed to this Morning Watch as to that evening one, ten years ago. Yet it would ill become me to forget you. I like to think of you. I only wish I were one half as good as you, poor old Rufus !

Spiders and Stars

"I WAS nearly killed again this morning," said a spider to her mother; "indeed I don't know how I escaped. The new maid is far neater and tidier and kinder-looking than the last one, and I thought I would please her by ornamenting the kitchen a bit. So I sat up all night, and wove your favourite pattern, and finished it just before she rose, and I waited to see what she would say. And the moment she saw the web she went for her besom, and swept it away, and I thought I was killed. And I am not going to spin any more. It's of no use; one gets no thanks for it."

"Don't cry, like a good spider," said her mother. "I am very sorry for you. I have spun thousands of webs in my day too, long before you were born, and there is not one of them left standing unless in places where there is nobody to admire them. But I am sure it is our duty to spin for all that. We spiders have done a great deal of good in the world. For example——" "Oh, I know, Mother, please don't tell me again about King Robert the Bruce." "Don't be naughty, child, I wasn't going to speak about him, though it was a great story with my mother. But I was going to tell you what I found out the other day. The wisest men in a country are astronomers, for they can tell what will happen thousands of years after this, and they can measure and weigh

stars that other men can't see, and yet they can't get on without our webs! There was a very great one called Herschel who said he was much hindered in his work because he could not get wires as thin as he would like. But now astronomers use our webs, and, if they can find a spider who can spin very beautiful threads, they take her with them and hold her in great honour, and send her webs to other astronomers in all parts of the world." "Really, Mother?" "Yes, my dear, spinning is all that we can do, and we must just spin our very best. I am too old now, though I think I could weave a great deal better than many of the young spiders I see, though they talk about their education. But I have taught you well, and, if you do your best, it may be some astronomer will get his eye on you some day, and you may become a great and famous spider when your poor mother is lying in her grave."

I confess I was much struck when I overheard this conversation, and I wondered if the old spider was really speaking the truth. I have since read several books, and have found, to my delight, that every word she said is true.

When an astronomer looks at the heavens through his telescope, he sees a great many objects at once, just as we do when we look through a window. But, as he wishes to watch one particularly, he has to try some plan whereby that object may be specially marked out. A circular case is put inside the telescope and two wires are fixed on it at right angles to one another. He tries to get the star in behind the point where the

lines cross. But the stars being so far away are so small that the wires hide them. The very thinnest silver wires that could be drawn, the finest hairs or silk threads, are all much too thick, and astronomers were in great difficulty till Professor Fontana, of Florence, suggested the use of the threads of spiders' webs in 1755, and these have been used ever since, having been found every way superior to every other thread that has been tried, superior in thinness, in elasticity, and in perfection of shape.

The Last Hip

But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.—Dan. XII. 13.

"Oh, WHAT a surprise you gave me!" said a snowdrop whose tiny green spear had but newly burst through the black earth into the dim light of a December day. "That scarlet coat of yours made me think you were the rising sun."

"Alas! if I'm like anything, it is not the rising but the setting sun, for my day is done. There were seven of us, wild roses, at the end of June. I am all that remains of the last of the seven, and I have lived in vain. The rest of them all did something, though in different ways. But I have come to naught."

"Don't say that," said the snowdrop. "It is hard to say what God may make of you yet. But you might tell me about the others. There were seven of you, I think you said?"

No. 1

"Yes; and, the very day we all came out, something shook the bush, I don't know what, and the leaves of the one that I think looked the prettiest fell to the ground, and a man wrote a poem about it. I only know the first two lines:

> 'Tis something to have beautified the world
> For even one hour.'

But no one will ever write about me."

"You don't know," said the snowdrop; "but, even if no one does, just remember these same two lines."

No. II

"An artist plucked the second, and made such a lovely water-colour sketch of it that one could scarcely have told which was the original and which the copy. But no one will ever make a sketch of me."

"You don't know," said the snowdrop.

No. III

"A cheery little girl, who passes through the wood twice every day, took the third and gave it to her teacher, and the teacher gave it to a timid little child who had come that morning to school for the first time, and the child became happy at once. But no child was ever made happy by me."

"You don't know," said the snowdrop.

No. IV

"It was an old woman who took the fourth. She was on her way home from church, and was so uplifted over the minister's sermon—his text had been the first verse of the 20th Psalm,

'Jehovah hear thee in the day
When trouble He doth send'—

that she put the rose opposite the verse, and now her Bible always opens at that place. But no one will ever put me in a book."

"You don't know," said the snowdrop. "They tell me there are many ways in which one may be put into a book."

No. v

"There were only three of us left now, and after a time a curious change came over us. Our leaves disappeared, and then in their place there came two lovely scarlet berries and myself."

"You mean three lovely berries," said the snowdrop. "And what came over the other two?"

"A little child pulled one of them as a birthday gift for its mother. And she keeps it in a pretty little china cup, more than a hundred years old, and shows it to her visitors. But no one will ever be asked to look at me."

"You don't know," said the snowdrop. "But what came over the sixth?"

No. vi

"A bird ate it during the hard frost we had five weeks ago. You remember it?"

"No," said the snowdrop, "I must have slept through it all."

"Ah, well! but at any rate it lasted two weeks, and the birds could get no food, and one morning my companion fell to the ground, and a bird, that was so cold and weak that it could hardly move, saw it and ate it and was revived, and I heard it say to another bird that, if it was spared, it would sing in memory of that berry when springtime comes; but no one will ever remember me."

"You don't know," said the snowdrop. "I think you must see yourself that

'God fulfils Himself in many ways,'

and I can't believe that His plans are only six.

I'm sure He has seven—aye, and, if need be, seventy times seven—in His mind. I'm only a poor snowdrop, hardly worth minding, but you've done *me* good, and that's something to me, and something to you too, I feel sure. And *I* have a story to tell *you* now.

"Nine months ago I felt my time had come, and I was going into the land of deep forgetfulness, but it was sleep, not death, that overtook me. And now I am going to rise again, and bloom again."

"And do you mean to say," said the hip, "that perhaps I too may rise again and become a rose bush and be a mother of roses?"

"I don't know for that; I am only a snowdrop and don't know how roses grow, but, if you will take my advice, just lie down quietly and rest, and thou shalt stand in thy lot, whatever it may be, at the end of the days. God will awaken you, if it be His will, at the right time, and when you awake you will be satisfied."

The Sockets of the Sanctuary

And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was 100 *talents and* 1775 *shekels. And of the* 100 *talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail ; 100 sockets of the* 100 *talents, a talent for a socket. And of the* 1775 *shekels Bezaleel made hooks for the pillars.*—Exodus XXXVIII. 25-28.

It was good of the Most High God, Whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, to come and dwell with men in the wilderness, and to dwell like them in a little tent. It was good of Him to ask them to make the tent for Him, and to make it of so many and of such different kinds of material, from precious stones to goats' hair, that everybody who was willing, rich or poor, could give something. But God did more than that to show how keen He was to dwell with men. All Israelites over twenty years of age were numbered, and every one had to pay a tax of half a shekel—that is, about a shilling. From the shillings so obtained were made a hundred sockets of solid silver for the wooden boards of which the walls of the Tabernacle were made to rest in. Each socket would weigh over a hundredweight, and would be worth about £350, and as there were a hundred of them—that is, one for every 2½ feet right round the Tabernacle—one can easily imagine how beautiful they would look, and how splendidly they would glisten both by

night and day. And God wished, yes, compelled, every Israelite to be able to say, "I helped to make these sockets ; I have a name and a place in my God's house ; it is my house as well as His ; I am one of God's sons."

This was the first house that God had on earth, and, just as a husband and wife have a peculiar affection all their days for their first home, so God, as it were, never seems to be tired of talking about that Tent of Meeting in the Wilderness. He counts the beams, and the sockets, and the hooks, over and over again, and He likes us to read about them.

But the Tent was not a permanency. It was made to be taken down, and in process of time Tent, bars, and sockets, and all, were lost or disappeared. Then God caused a Temple to be built of which He said, "This is My rest for ever : here will I dwell."

Every one of us has a name and a place in God's house. We were baptized into it when we were unconscious little children. We have given money to support it, both willingly and against our wills. We have helped to beautify it by our very presence every Sabbath day. But many become weary of it, and forsake it, and then Christ says to us, "Will ye also go away ? Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of My God ; and he shall go no more out, and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the City of My God : and I will write upon him My Own New Name."

The Butterfly and the Bee

"Good morning, Miss Bee; as busy as ever?"

"Busier, I think, Miss Beauty, and never more weary."

"So I thought from your look; and, indeed, I knew it before I saw you."

"How so?"

"Why, you were humming on E sharp. That is a sure sign you were tired; A sharp is your ordinary note."

"Dear me," said the bee, "I didn't know that. But how did you know it?"

"Oh!" said the butterfly, "it is easy knowing that; your wings were vibrating 330 times a minute."

"Ah!" said the bee, "I am not much wiser; you girls are great at mathematics now, I hear; but it never was our forte. My cousins, the hive bees, were always geometrizing and making hexagons; we humble bees made our combs anyhow! But what have you beauties turned mathematicians for?"

"I never thought myself a beauty," said the butterfly.

"I can hardly believe that," said the bee. "What is the use of all those thousands of facets in your eyes if you never saw your own loveliness?"

"To see the loveliness of others. I think you

bees are every whit as beautiful as we, and the flowers are more beautiful than either of us. But why, dear Busy, are you so troubled-looking? What's vexing you?"

"Everything is going against me. There are so many showers, and so few flowers, and the summer is passing, and I don't know what to do for honey."

"Oh, Busy, don't lose heart. Summer and winter, springtime and harvest, shall not cease. Be a bee and not a man; never despair; there will be brave days yet.

'To-morrow the sun may be shining,
Although it is cloudy to-day.'"

"All very true," replied the bee.

"But suppose the sun did shine and I get loads of honey, some fox, or rat, or boy—I really think the boys are worst—will get it all and my work shall be all in vain. Is that not enough to dishearten one? Confess."

"No doubt," replied the butterfly, "it is one of the things one cannot understand. But it is just the mystery of life. You see it everywhere. You remember the lovely apple-blossom a month or two ago?"

"Yes," said the bee.

"Well, where is it now? Isn't it all gone? It lived just to die for the fruit, for the apple; and in a month or two the apple will be eaten; it will die for the seed; and the seed will die for the apple tree that is to be; and so on, until the end of time. And it is the same with you and me.

We live to make honey, and fertilize the flowers, and of course we die, but is it not worth while to have lived to make honey or to help some bee to make it? And that honey may save some great man's life. One of the greatest born of woman lived on honey."

"I never thought of all that," said the bee, "but you must own there is a terrible lot of maybe's in what you say."

"I know that," said the butterfly, "but there is no maybe in God's wisdom, and no maybe in our duty. As for myself, my own future is dark indeed, but, when I think of what God has already done for me, how dare I lose heart? I was once a loathsome worm, feasting on rottenness, and spurned by men; and now I sip nectar and honey all the day long, and you yourself have called me Beauty, and there is no man nor child who sees me but stops to look at me and says, 'There is a lovely butterfly'; and the ancients called me Psyche, that is Soul, because I was an emblem of immortality. It would ill become us, my bonnie busy Bee, to distrust God; let us both work and wait and hope all the days of our appointed time till our change come."

After the Holidays

"Creeping like snail unwillingly to school."

First Snail: "Hallo, old man! You look heated!"

Second Do.: "Yes! The sweat is just pouring off me, and no wonder! I've done two and a quarter yards in half-an-hour. It's a record!"

Helix Prima, that is, Snail No. 1, continuing the conversation: "Two and a quarter yards in half an hour! It's terrific! That's the pace that kills. However did you manage it?"

Helix Secunda, that is, Snail No. 2: "I really don't know, but for one thing I had an extra good feed of a particularly good cabbage this morning. But I wish to ask you a question. How many teeth do they say you and I have got? I always forget."

No. 1. "You are not wishing any more, are you?"

No. 2. "No; but how many have we?"

No. 1. "We have 135 rows, and 105 teeth in every row; 100 times 135 is 13,500, and 5 times 135 is 675; that's 14,175."

No. 2. "Thanks. How I wish I could do mental arithmetic like you!"

No. 1. "But why did you ask?"

No. 2. "I heard three men talking in our

garden last night. They are glad the holidays are nearly ended. They are engineers, good men and true, clever, honest men, and fond of their work. They were talking about what they call turbine engines with I can't remember how many blades or how many revolutions in a minute. I was wondering if the inside of a ship is as wonderful as the inside of a snail's mouth. But what have you been doing?"

No. 1. "Oh! I got on to a window-pane by mistake, but I heard some good talk, all the same."

No. 2. "What about?"

No. 1. "Well, you see there are two boys, brothers, in that house and they were a bit down in the mouth because it was the last day of the play and they were to go back to school to-day. And their mother was telling them that she didn't blame them for being sorry, but they had had six weeks, and she wished them not only to be at school the first day it re-opened, but to be there early and to look as cheery as possible. But Alec, that's the boy next door, they told her, was going to take another week."

No. 2. "And what did she say?"

No. 1. "She said they must get him to go with them, and when they came home, for they would get away soon, they were to bring him with them and they would have a rhubarb dumpling for dinner."

No. 2. "And did they go?"

No. 1. "Yes, the whole three. The two boys played at being horses, and Alec was the

driver. And they jibbed and pranced a lot at the start, and then set off at a gallop, and, though their mother was laughing, I could see she was crying too. And, do you know, I heard her say—'They go, creeping like snail unwillingly to school.'"

"So ho!" said No. 2. "And is that the meaning of *creeping*? I always thought it was used to make fools of us poor snails, and that it meant we were lazy and went so slow, whereas you know we go as hard as we can, don't we? And so creeping means galloping? And these boys galloped off unwillingly! They had a sore fight with themselves, but they won the day. No wonder their mother was happy."

"So say I too," said No. 1, "but I'm not so sure as you are that creeping means galloping. I rather fear that interpretation will not meet with general acceptance from commentators!"

"What! what! what!" cried No. 2. "What big words are those? If you use that kind of jaw-breakers you'll soon need a new set of teeth yourself!"

"Oh!" said No. 1, "I was just having a bit of fun. If it is right for these nice laddies to pretend to be horses, what's the harm in my using big words once in a while and imagining I am a whale? But I'm going to try to beat your record. I feel it's in me. And it is these boys that have spurred me on!"

Columbus

Columbus had three ships with him on his great voyage, the *Santa Maria*, *Pinta*, and *Nina*. The *Nina* was of 40 tons burden ; the *Pinta* of 50, with a crew of 18 men. The *Santa Maria*, in which Columbus himself sailed, belonged to Juan de la Cosa, of Santona, a famous pilot, and the best drawer of maps in Spain. Her tonnlage was about 100, and her crew 52 all told. Unlike the other ships she was decked from end to end. She was 75 feet long, 22 feet broad, and 16 feet deep. The *Campania*, launched on the Clyide four weeks ago, the latest ship built for the American traffic, is 620 feet long, 65 broad, and 43 deep. She will have twelve boilers and ninety-six furnaces, and will carry 120 times as much as the *Santa Maria*.

The *Santa Maria's* crew were the scum of Spanish seaports, many of them criminals who were released from jail on the condition that they were willing to risk the voyage. One of the sailors was an Englishman, and one an Irishman. It was looked on as a desperate enterprise. People told them they would sail on and on till they came to the edge of the world, and they and their ship would plunge headlong over a precipice, or, if there was no precipice, there would at least be such a slope as should make return impossible.

Eighteen years had passed since Columbus

had conceived his great design. But his whole life had been a course of preparation. He was born in Genoa in 1447. A narrow six-storey building now stands on the site of the three-storey one occupied by his father, Domenico. Over the door is a tablet with these words :

> 'Nulla Domus titulo dignior. Hic, paternis in ædibus, Christopherus Columbus pueritiam primamque juventam transegit."

" No house more worthy of an inscription. Here, in his father's dwelling, Christopher Columbus spent his boyhood and early youth."

Domenico was a poor wool-weaver or wool-comber, and taught his son the same trade. But at the age of 14, Columbus went to sea. Chios in the Mediterranean, the Gold Coast of Africa, England, and Iceland, were among the places he visited. Losing no chance of learning anything connected with his profession, he became, according to the testimony of all seamen then and now, perhaps the most skilful navigator the world has ever seen. So watchful was he, night and day, of every sign offered by sea and sky, so orderly and accurate in everything, that even after days of furious storm, when neither sun nor stars appeared, he knew where he was within a few miles.

He lived in a great age, an age in which God made men think great things. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks had barred the old way to the East, but the Portuguese had found a new way by the Cape of Good Hope. Columbus

felt that there must be a third way by the west. If there was no land beyond the Mare Tenebrosum or Sea of Darkness, as the Atlantic was called, whence came the branches of strange trees, and pieces of wood carved by no European hand, that now and then were washed ashore after westerly gales? What meant, too, the dead bodies with strange faces that were found on the island of Madeira? So many, so diverse, are God's messengers to men. We know now that America had been discovered before by way of Iceland and Greenland. A Norseman, Bjarni Herjulfsen, in 986, had drifted to the coast of Nova Scotia in a fog, but had not had the curiosity to land. Another, whose monument is now in Boston, Leif Eriksen, in the year 1000, touched at Labrador and afterwards made several trips from Greenland. On one of them he took a bull with him which so frightened the poor Indians by its bellowing that for three weeks they remained in hiding. Nothing, however, came of these discoveries. Then, as now, God was ready but men were not. God had to wait other 500 years.

Columbus sailed on Friday, 3rd August, 1492, at eight in the morning. After spending some time in the Canary Islands refitting his ship, he set sail once more on the 6th September. On the 16th they reached the Sargasso or Weedy Sea. Thenceforward they had delightful breezes, the morning so pleasant that it needed but the song of the nightingale to make them believe they were at home in Andalusia. But the sailors soon began to murmur, and then to curse. Each

league they sailed seemed a league nearer destruction. It was with the utmost difficulty their sleepless admiral prevailed on them to go on. By and by strange birds met them, the clouds hung low, a branch with fresh berries was picked up. On Thursday, the 11th October, the *Pinta* fished up a cane and a stick wrought with iron, while the *Nina* sighted a stake covered with dog-roses. At ten that night Columbus standing on the poop saw "what seemed like a candle going up and down, and did not doubt that it was true light, and that it was on land." At two o'clock next morning, Friday, 12th October, 1492, a common sailor on board the *Pinta*, Rodrigo de Triana, called out "Land!"

A few hours afterwards, Columbus, clad in complete armour with a crimson robe over it, and with the royal banner of Spain in his hand, rowed ashore, and was the first himself to leap upon the land. He and all who were with him fell upon their knees and wept. It is now settled, according to Mr. Markham, the eminent explorer and geographer, that the part of the New World first touched was the south-east end of Watling Island, one of the Bahamas. The natives crowded round, wondering at their beards and white faces. "Their conversation," says Columbus, "is the sweetest imaginable, they love their neighbours as themselves, and their faces are always smiling." These natives little knew the fiendish cruelties they were soon to suffer at the hands of these white men's countrymen!

Columbus returned to Spain in the *Nina* in the

following March. His father happily was still living. He made three other voyages, discovering new islands and new coasts, discovering too how ungrateful a king can be. On the third voyage Columbus was actually sent home in chains.

> Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean ! chains
> For him who gave a new heaven, a new earth,
> Gave glory and more empire to the kings
> Of Spain than all their battles.

He died at Valladolid, in Spain, the 20th of May, 1506, in poverty. But, of course, he had a pompous funeral.

A Garden Tragedy

But God prepared a worm.—Jonah IV. 7.

WHEN a long time of rain was followed by two days of sunshine and great heat, the strawberries in a certain little garden began to redden almost as one looked at them. In the garden adjoining, over the wall, there lived a mother mavis and her two young ones. The mother bird knew what would happen, especially in the case of two very large berries, but wisely said nothing. She knew from experience that "there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." The young ones, however, discovered the berries for themselves, and nearly knocked each other over the nest disputing as to which of them had seen them first, each of them saying, "It was me!" Had they been only half-educated, they would have said, "It was I!" But being good scholars and having a mother who spoke beautifully and never made a mistake in grammar in her life, they always said, "It was me," and they *never* said, "Between you and I."

Now the garden belonged to an old man and his wife who had come to live there at the May term. And, when the old man saw the two strawberries reddening, he came into the house, and, making his wife take his arm, led her out triumphantly, as if he had had some hand in it, and showed her them, and said, "We shall have

these, if all's well, on your birthday, the big one for you and the smaller one for me."

"No," she said, "the big one for you and the little one for me." And so hot and so loving was the contention between them that the two little mavises, who had been having their second afternoon nap, rose out of their beds and perched on the dyke and watched them, and were greatly comforted when the old people went away.

"Oh!" said the younger one, "I don't believe they saw them after all," and with that they laughed heartily and went away and told their mother.

"Don't be too sure," she said. "When you have lived as long as I have in the world, you'll find that men and women are just about as clever as ourselves, and they are fit for anything!"

Ten minutes afterwards, when the young birds were going to have their third afternoon's sleep they heard to their amusement the old man and his wife talking. Then they hopped on to the dyke to watch, and judge of their consternation when they saw the man stoop down and lead the shoot with the two big berries on it into a wide-mouthed glass jar. Their breasts positively heaved with indignation, and they looked at one another, as much as to say, "*Did you ever!*"

Then the old couple went away smiling, but the birds flew home with a sad heart, and told their mother.

"My dears," she said, "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. This a world in which many things may happen. Only, I think,

if these people had been wise, they wouldn't have claimed the first-fruits of the garden for themselves. Many a day in the early summer, when the sun was warm, your father and I sang to them, and they listened and seemed pleased. I think they needn't have grudged us some little hire for our pains. But we shall see what we shall see."

That night there was a little black slug, oh, such a little one! going on some errand across the strawberry bed, and in the distance, far, far away, almost nine inches off, it saw something glittering in the moonlight.

"What can this be?" it said, and with that it changed its plans and its course, and, in less than two hours, it came to the glass jar, and in another hour it had found its way in, and in half an hour it had found the bigger of the two strawberries, and had eaten a hole nearly three-eighths of an inch deep, for it was very, very hungry, and then it fell sound asleep, and dreamed the very best dream it had ever dreamed in its life.

Next day the berries got redder and redder, and the old man said to himself, "They will just be in perfect condition by Saturday." And the young mavises lay and cried in their nests. "Never mind," said their mother, "there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. This is a world in which many things may happen."

Next night, when the slug awoke and discovered that its dreams were true and that it was actually inside a great big strawberry after all, it made signals to a friend. Now the signals

between slugs are like the signals between ships at sea by wireless telegraphy; they are very hard to explain, especially if one doesn't understand the process. But, somehow, the slug made them, and its companion came, and they ate a tunnel through one berry, and then through the other, and then they made another tunnel in each at right angles to the first, and then they ate round and round in circles. And then Saturday morning came, and the old man was early afoot and said, "These berries will be at their very best at twelve o'clock, and then my wife and I will come down and pull them, and we'll have them for her birthday dinner at one o'clock, and she will see and own at last that I did right in renting this house and garden."

At twelve o'clock the old man said, "Give me your arm, my dear; this is your birthday, and we are to have a strawberry feast when dinner is over." Then they looked very proudly at each other and went down the two front steps and along the garden walk in a kind of stately solemn procession.

Then the old man stooped down and removed the jar, and, even as he plucked the berries, the berries collapsed in his fingers, for the slugs had riddled them through and through, and had left nothing but a thin outside shell, as boys do when they make turnip lanterns, and then he and his wife nearly collapsed with chagrin when he said, "My dear, we outwitted the thrushes, but the snails have outwitted us!" And the young mavises in their turn nearly collapsed with

laughter, and went home and told their mother. But all she said was, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip. We live in a world, my dears, in which many things may happen, and do happen every day!"

A Cresset

Ye are the light of the world.—Matt. v. 14.

A LIGHTHOUSE with its equipment, if it be an ordinary land station, may cost from £5,000 to £9,000 ; if it be built on a reef far out at sea, like Skerryvore, which lies 10 miles from the island of Tyree, or 24 from Iona, it may cost nearly £90,000. But no one grudges it.

Long ago the only kind of beacon that ships had to guide or warn them in the dark was either a simple lamp, or what we call a chaffer or brasier, a grate of coals such as workmen and night-watchmen use on the open street. Sometimes the brasier was hung from a tall pole shaped like a cross, and was therefore called a cresset from the French word *croisette*. Some of these cressets were very large, using more than a ton of wood or coal every night. The cresset in the illustration was used as a night beacon for over a hundred years, till as late as 1790, in St. Agnes, one of the Scilly Islands, off the coast of Cornwall. The square hole in the side was, one may presume, for draught and for removal of the ashes. This cresset, now resting from its labours, is still to be seen in a garden in the adjacent island of Tresco. It is used as a flower-stand, and, filled with scarlet geraniums, blazes, like a lesser light to rule the day, with a sweeter, softer flame.

A CRESSET

Few parts of the British Coast have a sadder tale to tell of shipwrecks than the Scilly Islands. Oh, the multitude that shall arise from these waters when the sea gives up the dead that are in it !

One of the most touching of these memories is that which relates to the death of Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovel. He was coming home from the siege of Toulon in his flag-ship, the *Association*, with other twenty vessels, fifteen of them being great line-of-battle ships. They left Gibraltar on the 10th October, 1707. On the afternoon of the 22nd the weather was both foggy and squally, and then occurred a grievous thing which the Scillonians speak of to this day. A seaman on board the *Association*, whether from local knowledge, or from some strange instinct that some sailors have, deemed that they drew near to some country, and told the officer of the watch that he feared that unless the ship's course were altered she would soon be on the rocks of Scilly. The Admiral, hearing of this, ordered the seaman to be brought before him. The man on being questioned held fast to his opinion, and this so angered Sir Cloudesley, who felt that a slight had been passed on one of his officers, that he ordered the man to be hanged at the yard-arm. The sailor, strange to say, asked to be permitted to read aloud a psalm to the assembled crew before he died. The request was granted him. The psalm he chose was one of the two or three tremendous ones that are not meant to be used by us every day, that God would have us reserve for specially terrible

and solemn times. It was the 109th, the psalm that is applied to Judas in the New Testament, the psalm that denounces the wrath of God on those who with their eyes open reward evil for good, and hatred for love, and remember not to show mercy, but persecute the poor and needy man, and slay the broken in heart. After the psalm was read the poor sailor was hanged, and then, while the body was still dangling from the yard-arm, the ship struck a rock and went to pieces, and of its 800 men but one was saved. The Admiral himself was washed ashore, with his life still in him, but a woman killed him for the emerald ring he wore. It was she herself who told the story thirty years afterwards, as she lay dying.

But worse remains to be told. For three other ships, the *Eagle*, the *Romney*, and the *Firebrand*, following in the *Association's* wake, struck another reef, and that night more than 2,000 British seamen perished.

Amongst the Scillonians in those days, and long after, we are told, there were men and women called *wreckers*, who made it their business to show false lights to lead ships to destruction, that they and their neighbours might be enriched by the cargoes that were washed ashore. So, too, amongst ourselves there are men and companies, publicans, gamblers, keepers of music-halls, who lay snares for souls. Be it our high task to seek to save those souls from death.

In a book more than 300 years old, the words which our Lord applies to His great Forerunner

are translated thus : " He was a burning and a blazing cresset."

At the beginning of a New Year and a new decade we should hear the cry, " Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." Let us awake from slumber, and trim our lamps, and stir up others to buy oil for themselves, that they and we may go forth tō meet Him gladly.

The crews and passengers on board ships rarely see, and still more rarely meet, the men who keep the lighthouses, though sometimes a courteous captain, passing within hail, will dip his flag, much to the keepers' content. But the keepers do their duty all the same, and the sailors know it, and bless them for it in their hearts. And God knows it, too.

Little Faith

Shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?—Matt. VI. 30.

THE flowers in a certain garden were always pleased when their mistress came out to cut them for her table, but they were specially well-pleased when they found they were to be put on the tables in the church corridor or in the porch, either on the prayer-meeting night or on the Sabbath day. Whilst they were very glad, therefore, to be at their best on any day of the week, they preferred to be ready for pulling on Wednesday or Saturday, for in that case they had a chance of getting to church.

September, you may recollect, was very wet in some places, and the flowers in this garden were not so plentiful as usual. Every one, therefore, that bloomed was pretty sure to be noticed. In one of the corners there was one lovely crimson single dahlia that came out, to its own great astonishment, during a burst of sunshine one Friday afternoon. Its place for the Sabbath, it felt, was now secure. But that night there was another blast of wind and rain, and some sweet-peas close by were blown down from their stakes right on the dahlia's top. It was just going to say "I wish you had not done that," when it noticed that some of the sweet-pea flowers were

trying to speak. Being only half-opened they were not able to speak very distinctly, but the dahlia made out this much, that they would have liked to have bloomed if only for one hour, before the storm had laid them low. The dahlia saw that their trial was worse than its own.

The Saturday forenoon was more boisterous still, and most of the flowers in the garden were sorely bruised and tarnished. About one o'clock the weather cleared, and the lady made up three or four bouquets. Then, in trying to lift up the sweet-peas, she found the flower which they had sheltered.

It was on its way to the church in a little basket, when a gust of wind swept it out against a wall at the corner of the street. The lady, not noticing it, passed on, and the poor dahlia was disconsolate. "This is a judgment on me," it said, "for not thanking the sweet-peas for protecting me from the wind and cold, and I well deserve it." But, the next minute, a poor bee that had been beaten down by the wind and rain, and was lying half-benumbed, felt, as if it were in a dream, a gracious odour, and "deeming that it drew near to some country" opened its eyes, and saw, like Hagar in the wilderness, a fount of nourishment that had been opened by a miracle! So it ate and drank and was refreshed, and carried some home besides, as it went on its way rejoicing.

A little after that, three children, two boys and a girl, who had been spending a somewhat disappointing day at the coast, and were now on their way to the train with their parents and with

the humble spoils they had gathered that day—some whelks and mussels, and a live crab about the size of a sixpence, and a few dandelion leaves—found the dahlia and carried it home five-and-twenty miles. The whelks and mussels were alive, alive O ! for only a few hours. The crab went steadily back—not backwards, though !—till the Tuesday, when it died, a saucerful of fresh water proving but a poor substitute for its ocean bed. But the dahlia lived for a week, and was on exhibition all that time to friends and neighbours. From a catalogue in a florist's window they found out its name, and from the dictionary they learned that it was a native of Mexico, though it was from a Swedish botanist called Dahl that it received its name. And, perhaps, years after this, some girl who may read this may get up dux in her class, or win a few marks in some competition, because she knows how to spell that difficult word.

And yet the poor dahlia thought that Saturday morning that its life and its history had alike both come to an end.

Her Waterpot

So the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the men, Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did; can this be the Christ?—John IV. 28 (R.V.)

WHY did the Woman of Samaria leave her waterpot at the well?

Some think it was because, in her excitement and in her joy, she forgot all about it. What was the water in Jacob's well compared with the river of God's pleasures and the water of everlasting life!

Some think it was an indirect way of giving a drink, not only to Christ, but to His disciples, who had now come up while He and she were talking. People in the East are great drinkers of water. We had an Indian lady lately for our guest, and the last thing she did, as she was going away, though she had only an hour's journey before her, was to take a drink of water and fill up the water-bottle she carries with her wherever she goes. The Woman of Samaria knew that the disciples would be longing for a draught, and, though she neither cared nor dared to offer any to a Jew, she would put no barrier in their way. There was the pitcher, and they could help themselves if they chose!

But I think she had two other reasons for leaving the waterpot.

1. It was a pledge that she would return. Christ and she had come very close to one another. "He taught her all the mercy, for He showed her all the sin." And, when she was turning round to go to the town to speak to the men of the place about the wonderful Stranger she had met, she left her water-vessel as if to say—"Don't think I'm going away for good. I'm not saying 'Good-bye,' I'm coming back." A minister once told me that, as he walked up and down in the church in the interval between the forenoon and the afternoon worship, it always went to his heart when he saw a cloak, or a waterproof, or a pair of spectacles, left lying in a seat. Other people might or might not return in the afternoon, but here was one who, so to speak, had bound herself to come back and had actually given hostages for her return.

2. It bound Christ to wait for her! It was as if she had said, "You will stay and watch that till I come back, won't You?" For it was not only an act of courtesy, but also an express requirement of the law of Moses, that He should keep that which she had committed to Him. "In like manner shalt thou do with all lost things of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found; *it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it*, and thou shalt restore it to him again: thou mayest not hide thyself." Deut. xxii. 2-3.

Isn't that very wonderful? The stone, the seal, the guards, that our Lord's enemies placed over the grave where He lay—He burst through them all, and went His own way. But a poor

woman's pitcher, a poor woman's touch, a poor woman's tears, a blind man's cry, a little man's persevering curiosity—all these were things He yielded to, and yielded to right willingly, for they were " cords of love."

It is said of Daniel O'Connell that he once agreed to fight a duel, but that he took care to let the police know about it beforehand, so that they might prevent him ; and prevent him they did. Some time after, when pleading as an advocate in some case before a judge, he said at one point, " I'm afraid your lordship does not apprehend me."

" Perfectly, Mr. O'Connell," was the answer ; " and indeed," added the judge, " I may say there's no man so easy to apprehend, *especially when he wants to be apprehended !* "

In Higginson's History of the United States there is a story about two famous pioneer hunters who lived 60 years ago, Simon Kenton and Daniel Boone, of Kentucky. The two men, unknown to each other, were hunting for game in the vast unfelled forests of what is now one of the Western States, and, as they approached the Licking Valley from opposite points and each paused to reconnoitre before leaving the shelter of the woods, each felt and recognised the presence of another human being in the valley. Then began a long series of manœuvres on the part of each to discover who the other was without betraying himself, and so great was the skill of each that it took 48 hours before either could make up his mind that the other was a white man and a friend, not an

Indian and a foe. It is not easy, indeed it is hardly possible, to keep two people apart who wish to meet.

Haven't you sometimes noticed, when a very little girl is playing at hide-and-seek with her father, how eager she is to be found out, and how pointedly she tells him where to look? "I'm here, Daddy! I'm here! in behind the curtain!"

So, may we not say with all reverence, if we seek Christ honestly and earnestly, we shall not be long in finding Him, for He is very willing to be found? He Who has come so far already will meet us more than half-way!

The Stepmother Hen

A PORTRAIT of the old hen and seven of her chickens was taken when they were very young, when she was sitting under the shelter of a hay-stack one day. There were fourteen of them altogether, but five of them were under her wings, and two on the other side of her, and so you could not see them. She herself had been hatched by a patent incubator, which did all for her that an incubator can do. But, of course, it couldn't supply a mother's love and a mother's care. The hen, therefore, never learned any arithmetic, and was not even able to count her own chickens. She knew them by sight, and she knew each one's step—for all women-folk are wonderfully clever that way—and even the different noises they each made as they pecked their food from the plate. They had all their own names, too, Black Bars, and Yellow Neb, and Round Shoulders, and so on. But, if you had asked her how many there were, she would have said, " I'm no scholar ; I never was at school, and the only mother I had was a patent American gas-stove."

Five only of the chickens were her own, but her love to all the little ones soon made her forget that. She could have told after a little thought, I have no doubt, which were her own, but the question was never put to her, and she never put it to herself. She was good, and

equally good, to them all. For three weeks she sat on the eggs, so anxious, so diligent, that she seemed almost to live without food, and certainly she never slept for more than forty winks at a time. When they were hatched, oh, the trouble and the worry she had with them! They were always hungry, always stravaging where they had no right to go, climbing into impossible places where they lost their heads and then cried "Murder!" And then there were rats and cats and dogs and bad boys and clumsy men, and brooms and sieves and other things always tumbling on the top of them. I tell you she had a sore time of it. In two months she lost 19⅓ oz. in weight, and grew so thin that she said herself, "I expect some morning when I wake to find I have turned into a pillow-slip!" But she loved her little ones, and they loved her, and that was all she needed.

Now there were in that neighbourhood some other hens that were envious, and they always called her "Steppy." If she punished her children when they did wrong, they would say, "Aye, it's well seen she is not their mother." If she was kind to them, they either said that it was her duty, or else that she was ruining them, and that it was a pity they had no one to care for their highest interests.

"How's Steppy?" they would say to the chickens; "you look hungry, are you sure you get enough meat?" The chickens not knowing any evil suspected none, and loved their mother more and more. The little girls amongst them

trimmed her feathers and asked when theirs would be as big. The boys complained about pains in their throats and the breaking of their voices, and told her wonderful stories of monstrous worms yards long that they had fought with and overcome.

But one day the oldest of them, hearing the usual question about Steppy, said, "Why do you call my mother Steppy? I don't know the meaning of that word." Whereupon the other hens all laughed, and said, "Don't you know that she is not your mother? she is not one drop's blood to you, she is only your stepmother!"

That very day he told the other thirteen what he had heard, and then they all went to their mother, and said, "You are not our mother! You have nothing to do with us!"

The poor hen was so greatly put about that she could not speak, and the young ones, thinking that to be a stepmother was surely something very sinful, made up their minds to sleep under a cart that night at the other end of the stack-yard. And such a night they all put in! Their mother slept none, and of the young ones eight had the most horrid nightmares and the rest most unpleasant dreams.

They were all awake before sunrise, and had made up their minds to go home as soon as the day broke. But alas! there was another destiny in store for them. Before they knew it they were squeezed by someone into a hamper, and carried to the railway. Four hours afterwards they found themselves in Edinburgh, and were carried along

Princes Street, and up the Mound ; but neither Sir Walter Scott's monument nor the grand shops, nor, strange to say, the models in the windows of the Peers' Coronation Robes, interested them in the very least ! They were all thinking about their mother.

And if she *was* our stepmother," one of them said, " I think that was a reason not for loving her less, but for loving her all the more for what she did for us."

The Martyrdom of Polycarp

POLYCARP was put to death about the year 166. He was the friend and pupil of the Apostle John. When the officers came to seize him he came down from the upper room where he had been resting, ordered meat and drink to be set before them, and then asked to be allowed to pray. This was granted him, and for more than two hours he prayed, making mention by name of everyone whom he had known, both small and great. He was then taken into the town of Smyrna. On his way he met the magistrate who had ordered his arrest. "What harm is there," he said to Polycarp, "in saying 'Lord Cæsar,' and sacrificing, and so on, and so escaping all danger?" Polycarp was silent for a little, and then said, "I will not do as you would have me." The magistrate, in anger at the old man's obstinacy, thrust him out of the carriage so rudely that he scraped his shin, the marks being visible to his friends when he afterwards stripped for the stake. When the party reached the race-course where the multitude was assembled, there was a great uproar, but clear above the din a voice was heard, "Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man." The magistrate urged him to have pity on his grey hairs: "Revile Christ and I will let you go." Then Polycarp made the memorable answer, "Eighty-and-six years have I served Him, and He has never done

me wrong : how then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour ? " Thereupon there were loud cries of " Burn him, burn him," and a rush in search of wood was made in every direction.

He was then ordered to undress. It was noticed that it was with difficulty the old man could take off his shoes, his disciples for many years having done that for him. Next he was bound to the stake, and, after he had prayed, the fire was lit. The flame, however, bellied out under the wind like the sail of a ship, and behind it could be seen the old man's body scorched, but not consumed. Then as the flames seemed to be dying out and he still lived, an executioner was ordered in, and Polycarp was slain with the sword.

Ruby's New Year Trip

So He giveth His beloved sleep.—Psalm CXXVII. 2.

On the 30th and 31st December, Ruby Masterman must have walked at least six-and-thirty miles and climbed about 1,774 feet—half the height of Schiehallion. How many foot-pounds of work, to use an engineer's expression, she must have done besides, it would take a better mathematician than I am to calculate. No, she was neither playing golf nor hockey ; she was only serving in a grocer's shop, and, as both her master and his other assistant were ill, she had all to do, and more, for the girl who came to help only hindered. So she was well named " Masterman," as at least twenty customers all " somewhat wittily " observed—as the great Cæsar once said of a much poorer joke. And, oh, how many things were asked for that were on the topmost shelves ! But, if it would be hard to reckon up all the work she did with her hands and feet, it would be harder still to tell all that her mind and heart had to do. She had to listen, and listen with interest, to everybody's plans for the holidays, and to sympathize with a good many people's griefs. For everybody liked and trusted Ruby. Women, specially, who had ill-doing, drinking husbands, found relief and comfort when they told her, sometimes in words, more often by a look, that " he was at it again." But she was even more

vexed for the one or two husbands whose wives were doing wrong, for a woman that drinks is one of the saddest things in the whole world. There was one woman, in particular, the young wife of an engineer at sea, about whom she was much distressed. All the same, Ruby was looking forward eagerly to New Year's Day. Most of the townspeople were going to Edinburgh, but she and her people were to pay their first visit to Glasgow. They meant to spend the day chiefly in the Art Galleries, and they were to have " high tea " with an uncle newly come home from India.

On ordinary nights Ruby, like a famous Lady Salisbury, used to " vault " into bed. This last night of the year she could hardly crawl in, so tired was she. Her last words to her mother were, "Do you know, Mother, I wish we could have taken poor Mrs. So-and-so—that was the engineer's wife—with us to-morrow. I think she is feeling very lonely and depressed."

Half a minute after saying that, she was sound asleep.

In the morning there was no rousing her, and it was finally, though most reluctantly, deemed best by all to let her sleep on. Her father and brothers and sisters could go to Glasgow, while her mother would keep watch and ward. If Ruby were rested enough by midday, the two could join the others at the uncle's later on.

But that was not to be. Ruby slept on, and on, and on, all day, till 10 o'clock at night, when the singing at family worship awoke her for a moment. It sounded so sweetly that she thought it was the

New Year "Waits" playing in the streets in the distance. Then she fell over again, and slept till five.

At 6.30—for the shop must open in an hour—her mother bade her rise. Breakfast was ready, and not a common everyday breakfast either! There was a little porridge in a little china plate (on ordinary days she got a big bowlful) with cream, too, in a china bowl, and ham and egg and sausages, and coffee such as might have pleased an Arab queen. But Ruby couldn't understand it. Where were the others? "Aren't we all going to Glasgow?"

"My poor lassie," said her mother, "they've all been! New Year's Day was yesterday, and you slept all through it; this is Thursday, and now you must just——"

"Go away back to the shop? You don't mean it, Mother!"

And then poor Ruby lifted up her voice—for she was just eighteen and a girl besides—and wept. But presently she laughed; then wept again; and then she smiled. Her sense of humour and her spirit of contentment had won the day.

"And what did you do, Mother?"

"Oh! I just peeped in now and again to see how you were getting on, but I had good company, for Mrs. So-and-so (the engineer's wife), on her way somewhere or other, but looking very dull, saw me at the window and came in, and she spent the day with me, and we were both very happy, though of course we were very sorry for you."

And that good news filled Ruby's cup to overflowing.

Ruby's adventure made her a kind of heroine, for all the journeys and excursions that others had made, however interesting and curious, were as nothing to her Trip to the Land of Nod! And many a body had, and will have, a good laugh over it. But no one has laughed so much as she has done herself. And she laughs most—for it is with tears in her eyes—when she is on her knees before God. For the engineer's wife came that day and said, "Ruby, you don't know how glad and thankful I am that you didn't go to Glasgow yesterday. . . . Your mother told me how sorry you were on Tuesday night that I wasn't to be with you yesterday . . . but I was . . . and it was God that sent you that deep sleep . . . and brought me to your mother's house . . . and I'm going to stay with you and help you in the shop till your master is better, and it won't cost him anything, and it will save your strength a little, and it will be good for me, too."

Except the Lord do build the house,
The builders lose their pain:
Except the Lord the city keep,
The watchmen watch in vain.

'Tis vain for you to rise betimes,
Or late from rest to keep,
To feed on sorrow's bread; so gives
He His beloved sleep

Caroline Herschel

Miss Herschel kept a "register of sweeps." That was one of the things she did. They were her own sweeps, for she made them, hundreds of them, and some of them were successful and brought her great honour, and some were not. Now guess what Miss Herschel was.

Women sweep floors, and men sweep chimneys, and pirates sweep the ocean, and astronomers are said to "sweep" the heavens when they search them with the telescope, and all may be done to the glory of God, except the third. Miss Herschel was a sweeper of the heavens, and swept to some purpose, for she found eight comets, five of which she was the first to see. She kept her notes of these discoveries in a little packet of coarse paper bearing the superscription, "This is what I call the Bills and Receipts of my Comets."

She was born in Hanover in 1750. Her childhood was not too happy. Her parents disagreed about her education, the mother thinking the simplest elements enough, the father wishing to teach her all that she could learn.

In 1772 she came to England to live with her brother, afterwards Sir William. At the beginning of his career he was an organist and teacher of music, and Caroline sang at his concerts. Turning his attention to astronomy, he began to

polish mirrors for telescopes by day, while he watched the sky by night, and here again his sister helped him, feeding him with a spoon when polishing—for he dared not lift his hands off the mirrors sometimes for many hours—fetching and carrying for him continually. When he discovered Uranus in 1781, he was made astronomer to George III, at a salary of £200, not always paid, though the King had £80,000 a year from Parliament for the encouragement of science. Caroline was appointed his assistant at £50, and never had man a truer helpmeet. By night she acted as his amanuensis, writing down his observations as they came pouring from his lips ; noting the right ascensions and polar distances of the objects observed—only you don't know what that means. She it was who, having passed the night near the instrument, took the rough manuscript to her cottage at the dawn of day and produced a fair copy of the night's work on the following morning ; she it was who planned the labours of each succeeding night ; she it was who reduced every observation, made every calculation, arranged everything in systematic order, and so helped her brother to obtain his imperishable name. It was not easy for her to make calculations, for she had no grounding in mathematics, and her brother, unless at meal-times, could not afford to spend a moment teaching her.

But at any rate no moment was lost. When she served the pudding she had to cut it to an angle of so many degrees. Strange to say she never

could learn the multiplication table but had to carry a copy about with her. "I did nothing for my brother," she often said, "but what a well-trained puppy-dog would have done: that is to say, I did what he commanded me."

Modern astronomers have roofs that open and revolve at the turning of a screw, but in those days they stood or sat in the open air though the grass was wet with dew or covered with frost, and the ink was freezing in the bottles. There was the risk of accident besides; ropes and bars to be stepped over in the dark, and philosophers have shins like other folk. Once Miss Herschel was caught in the leg by a hook and laid up for weeks.

Then after a weary night's work and a short sleep, timepieces of all kinds had to be wound up, and paper ruled, and mirrors cleaned, and machinery repaired, and when evening came again and brother and sister hoped for a glorious spell of work, a score, and sometimes scores, of lords and ladies and princelings would arrive, all eager to get looking through the telescope and all needing everything to be explained.

In her old age she spoke of her whole life from the moment she had any recollection of existence as "days of sorrow, trouble, and disappointment." But her saddest days were her last. When she was seventy-two her brother died and she returned to Hanover. There she found friends whose whole aim seemed to be to get all the money from her that they could. But she had pledged her word and stayed with them till she died. She worked at astronomy, in ways

you could not understand, for several years after she left England, and then came old age with its cramps and sleeplessness and failing sight. The men in the town in which she lived cared only for pipes and politics while the women gossiped and played cards. Yet few things distressed her more than the honours that were paid her. Her dead brother was all in all to her, and honour given to her seemed but to detract from his.

In 1846, two years before her death, when she was ninety-six, the King of Prussia sent her a gold medal! Nineteen years ago, on the 4th of this month, a number of Scotsmen, and wise men too, sent a gold medal to Carlyle, he then being eighty. The old man refused to look at it, and little wonder. Miss Herschel took hers more graciously and put it in a box, but it grieved and agitated her no less.

She died 9th January, 1848. In her coffin by her desire there was a lock of her beloved brother's hair and an old almanac that had been her father's. Her epitaph was written by herself:

"Here lies the earthly covering of
CAROLINE HERSCHEL.
The eyes of her who is glorified were here below turned to the starry heavens. Her own Discoveries of Comets, and her participation in the immortal Labours of her Brother, William Herschel, bear witness of this to future ages."

Life and Adventures of Mrs. Mallard

(*Née* WILD-DUCK)

IT would take a big book were I to tell all that Mrs. Mallard passed through in her short, anxious life. She was born in Morayshire, in Scotland, and, of all places in the world for a duck, in an oak tree! Many a time, months after, she would tell her children some of her earliest recollections. "I had no sooner got my bill through my shell," she would say, "and hard work it was, than my dear mother kissed me and gave me some food, and then, at her bidding, I stretched myself and struggled out into the nest. The light dazzled me just for a moment, and then, as I was thinking what a beautiful world it was, I looked over the edge. Oh! how far away the ground looked. I was twelve feet up above it, and how was I ever to get down! I drew back in great fear, but soon fell asleep, and, when I wakened, it was next day, and the sun was shining, and I had twelve brothers and sisters. I was so happy! and was loving every one of them when my mother lifted me in her bill and laid me in a moment at the foot of the tree. Almost before I knew where I was the whole thirteen of us were scampering over the grass. But presently mother called us together, and told us we were going down to a lake a long way off, and we must do as she bade us for we might meet with

enemies on the road. So she told us what to do, and well for us, for we met some cruel boys. Mother saw them first and quacked, and we little ones ran into the grass and quaked. But oh! how it vexed me to see the boys chasing mother, and she seemed lame and unable to fly. I would have run out to help her had she not made us promise to lie hid no matter what happened to her. It was a whole hour before she came back, and we were all so glad. Then she laughed and told us how she had only pretended to be lame, and had led the cruel boys on and on till their boots were covered with mud and their legs so weary that they could hardly move. Then we set off again as hard as we could go, mother counting us every few minutes, and at last we came to the lake. Oh! how big it looked. But in we all plunged after her, and we looked so pretty, just like little ships, and mother like a great big man-of-war, and we caught flies and dived and splashed each other all over. But our joy did not last long. A big pike that had been watching us swallowed one of my brothers, and the very next moment, amid the confusion, a carrion crow darted in and carried off another. That left us ten girls and only one boy.

Mother was never the same after that. But she had a greater trial when October came. Father's health had broken down in April, and he had gone to a distance, so mother had the training of us all. When we fed among the rushes, eating the frogs, we kept watch by turns on the open water. Mother pleaded with us to be alw[illegible]s

faithful, and told us often how her grandfather had seen a sentinel, a soldier in the Crimea, fall down fainting as he guarded a heap of biscuit, too faithful to eat without permission. "And if a man could be so brave," she would say, "what ought not a duck to be?" Our brother looked very handsome in his dress of grey and green and blue, but he got vain and selfish. He was always cross when he kept guard. Well, one day we were in the reeds, and he outside. He had only watched five minutes when he began to cry out "Time's up." We never heeded him, and it seems he left his post and came after us. Mother bade him go back, and, just as he was reluctantly returning, we heard a noise of running on the bank. We all rose up, and in a moment six shots were fired, and my brother and four of my sisters fell dead.

Mother often spoke to us about it afterwards, and, when we girls went off early the year after to be married, her last words to every one of us were these: "Farewell; and, oh, be good and faithful."

These are some of Mrs. Mallard's recollections. I must now tell you of her own sad but noble end.

When Mr. Mallard married her, every bird that saw her said Miss Wildduck was the sweetest girl that ever came to Lindores Loch. She and her husband were very happy, and had eleven little ones that year. The year after they rebuilt their nest on the shore under a furze-bush, and had eleven large eggs. All went well for thirteen

days though it was a time of stormy weather. But one day Mr. Mallard went out never to return. I believe he was cruelly shot, but his poor wife did not know that, and waited and hoped against hope for his return. The weather grew worse ; rain and frost, and then wind and snow. Still she sat watching and waiting, day after day. There was no one to relieve her for a moment, and leave her nest for food she would not. She beat the snow off with her wings till her strength failed, and plucked more and more down off her breast to keep her poor eggs warm. But the wind and snow held on, and at last, still looking for her husband and loving her unborn little ones, she died. A passer-by found her next day. Her neck was stretched out, her wings a little extended, her mouth wide open and full of the drifted snow. She had remembered her mother's words, and was good and faithful to the last !

Hugh Latimer

BURNT AT OXFORD, 16TH OCTOBER, 1555

THE Reformation in England was never completed. The king was head of the Church and so reformation could not easily go further than he was inclined to let it. There was no man in England of the mettle of Calvin and Knox who saw all that was needed to be done, or who had the strength of mind or will to try to do it. Reformation was at one time led forward by the wishes of the people, and at another time driven back by the will of the sovereign.

Though there was no English Reformer of the first rank there were many noble men who saw what Popery was, and worked and suffered to make things better. Of these one of the most able and honest was Hugh Latimer. He was born in Leicestershire in 1490, and was sent to the University of Cambridge when he was only fourteen. He was a cheery lad and a man full of bright humour to the end. He was fond of throwing bits of his own history into his sermons, and, in preaching before Edward VI, he told the king, and he tells us this, about his home: "My father was a yeoman and had no lands of his own, only he had a farm of three or four pounds at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had walk for

a hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine. . . . He brought up his family in godliness and the fear of the Lord. . . . He kept me to school else I had not been able to preach before the King's Majesty now."

While he was at Cambridge, Reformation doctrines were spreading, but Latimer says: "I was as obstinate a Papist as any was in England." But Bilney, who became himself a martyr, was greatly taken with Latimer's honesty as well as with his gifts and resolved to try to bring him to the light, and succeeded. He soon became a very practical Christian, visiting prisoners and the sick. He had no very strong grip of doctrine, but he strove to bring men to the Bible. He preached with great point and power against abuses in the Church, especially against the worldly bishops and clergy. Before a church full of them once he said, "I would ask a strange question—Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England that passeth all the rest in doing of his office? I can tell—for I know him—who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you. It is the Devil. Among all the pack of them that have cure (have charges) the Devil shall go for my money, for he applieth his business. Ye unpreaching prelates, learn of the Devil to be diligent in your office. If ye will not learn of God, for shame learn of the Devil."

He was as fearless in speaking to bad landlords and to the king as he was in speaking to the

clergy. Henry VIII had appointed him his chaplain, and the king's favour was a constant help to him against his persecutors. That he did not gain Henry's favour by flattery is clear from such words as these which he sent in a letter to the king: "Wherefore, gracious King, remember yourself; have pity upon your soul, and think that the day is even at hand when you shall give account for your office, and of the blood that hath been shed by your sword."

It is a good sign of Henry that he liked Latimer all the more for his outspoken words, and, when the king fairly broke with the Pope, Latimer was made bishop of Worcester. He was not an "unpreaching prelate," and he was as zealous a Reformer as ever. Indeed he went too far to please the Court, and was imprisoned and forced to resign.

He continued, in prison or at liberty, to be the most popular and most powerful of the Protestant leaders. His lively humour and his homely directness made men like him and believe in him. But on the accession of Mary—Bloody Mary—who was determined to bring back England to Popery, Latimer was one of the very first to be marked for death. He was only sixty-five years of age, but though his frame was worn out with work and imprisonment and long disease, his spirit was as high as ever. He and his friend Ridley, bishop of London, were brought to the stake together. As the wood crackled round them, and the flames shot up, the brave old Reformer cheered on his friend to witness a good

confession. "Play the man, Master Ridley," he cried, "we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."

BILL OF CHARGES FOR BURNING RIDLEY AND LATIMER

	s.	*d.*
For 3 loads of wood faggots to burn Ridley and Latimer	12	0
Item, 1 load of furze faggots . .	3	4
For the carriage of these 4 loads . .	2	0
Item, a post	1	4
Item, 2 chains	3	4
Item, 2 staples	0	6
Item, 4 labourers	2	8
	25	2

A Flower of May

A LITTLE sprig of hawthorn came to me two weeks ago in a letter from a Greenock lad who is settled in Vancouver, British Columbia, 5,700 miles away. It took seventeen days to come, yet it smells almost as sweetly as if it had been plucked this morning from the tree in my neighbour's grounds across the way.

It sets one a-marvelling once more over the strange power that God has given to plants and to so many other things that He has made, the power to reveal their presence by their odour. How is it that flowers, day after day, and even year after year, can give forth so much of themselves, and yet be none the poorer? Is it not just because they are so like Him Who made them, always giving, loving to give, and living to give?

The flowers are like Him, too, because their odours come so gently, and yet so irresistibly. There are some things in the world that we must look for, that we must go to see, some that we can only enjoy by an effort of will, but the fragrance of a flower comes to us, steals on us unawares, is with us ere we know it, like an unexpected guest.

But the flowers themselves are also like a host who is always ready for a guest, with all things furnished and prepared, no matter what hour the guest may come by day or night, no matter

whether he comes or not. We have all sometimes wondered, like the poet Gray, why

> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

But the reason is, they wish never to be taken aback. They have no need to say, like us so often, "Had I only known someone was coming I would have been prepared." They say that the great Napoleon once asked his cook how it was that he had always a fowl ready for him no matter what hour of the day he called for it, and the man made answer, " It is, Sire, because I put a fresh one on to roast every twenty minutes ! " So it is with the flowers, they are ready any hour because they are ready every hour.

And no doubt they have their reward, though we do not know it. If there be no man to see and bless them, there are the birds, and bees, and insects, and creeping things, and there are angels, and there is the Lord of all these hosts Himself, rejoicing in all that He has created and made, and stretching forth His hands all day long though no man may regard Him.

The may or hawthorn tree is not a native of America, but was taken thither from Europe, and we can almost imagine this little sprig coming home to see the land where its forefathers dwelt, and proud to show us, as it were, that it has kept the faith and been true to its colours and its odours, true to itself and true to them, though so far away from the old country.

Does not that illustrate the text which tells

us that the Four Living Creatures, and the Four-and-Twenty Elders, that fall down before the Lamb, have harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints ? We pray to God because Christ prayed to His Father from all eternity ; we pray because the Holy Spirit takes of the things that are His and shows them unto us ; we pray because the Spirit has taught us to say Abba, Father. Our prayers are, so to speak, transplanted flowers from Paradise that have taken root and are thriving here below. And, just as the exile far away is moved in heart and feels a sense of home, like those men of the Dorsetshire Regiment, of whom we read, who looked wistfully at one another when they found themselves trampling through " southernwood " on Russian soil on the day of battle, or like that lad in Vancouver who bethought himself of Greenock when he saw that hawthorn tree, so, when we pray, our prayers are as incense in God's sight. They rise up before Him as if they were the very prayers of His Own dear Son and the unutterable groanings of His Good and Holy Spirit—as indeed they are. II. Cor. 11. 15—" For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ."

Halley's Comet

EDMUND HALLEY, 1656-1742, was the first to prove what Sir Isaac Newton was the first to assert, that comets like planets go round the sun in obedience to the law of gravitation. Before their time people thought comets were signs of God's wrath, messengers of evil, coming no one knew whence and going no one knew whither. Halley, having set himself to find out all he could about the movements of every comet mentioned in history, concluded that one which he himself had seen in 1682 was the same as that which Kepler had seen in 1607, and another observer in 1531, and that it would appear again in 1758. He knew that he himself would not live to see it, but he bade astronomers look out for it, "and if," he said, "it should return, impartial posterity will not refuse to acknowledge that this was first discovered by an Englishman." And it came in 1758! and again in 1835, and in 1910.

Eight big planets go round the sun—Mercury, Venus, our Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, and these make up what we call our Solar System. Neptune is the furthest off from the sun, being 2,794 million miles away, but Halley's Comet, which was only 60 million miles away in May, will in thirty-eight years be 3,200 million miles away, and then it will begin to come back again.

A great distance! but how small compared with that of the fixed stars, those we see twinkling every night! The nearest of them, one called Alpha Centauri, is 25 million million miles away —more than 7,800 times the distance of the comet—and its light, travelling 186,300 miles a moment, takes $4\frac{1}{4}$ years to come to us. How great and wide are the dominions of our God!

The Grumbling Squirrel and the Thankful Rabbit

Be content with such things as ye have.—Heb. XIII. 5.

"You must have been lying on your wrong side, surely," said one squirrel to another, "you have done nothing but grumble ever since you wakened."

"I think I have good reason to grumble," said the other. "I have been sleeping nearly five months, and that means that I have lost five months' breakfasts and five months' suppers, not to speak of all the parties and picnics that I should have been invited to. And I hear there has been a wonderful thing in the heavens that they call a comet, though they can't tell me what it is, and I have missed seeing it, and they say it will never be back again, and somebody has been at my nuts, for I had a hundred and fifty-and-three when I lay down in October, and there are only nine-and-twenty left. Look at that ugly rabbit that has been enjoying himself all winter, and has never lost a meal, and I am sure he saw the comet every night. It is a queer world; things are not rightly divided in it."

"It certainly is a queer world," said Squirrel Number One, "and I can't think of anything in it queerer than your complaints. They are of two kinds:

1. Astronomical, and
2. Gastronomical.

(You cannot deny that whether that is *rightly* divided or not, it's *neatly* divided!) The one moment you seem to me to mind heavenly things, and the next moment earthly things. It is quite true you missed seeing the comet, and so did I, but what could be finer than last night's moon? and besides they say there is another comet coming in a month and a far grander one.

"And as to what you say about your nuts, your *Nuces Ambrosianæ* as well as your *Noctes Ambrosianæ*—I fear I am beyond your depth! but you'll understand that some day, perhaps, when you get more sense—you ate them all yourself, though you don't remember doing it, for you wakened three times and had three feeds, and I fear you can't have asked a blessing, but it is not too late to do it now. And you have more to give thanks for than you know.

"You were envying that rabbit. Well, I had a talk with him three days ago. He says it has been the severest winter he remembers, and he has seen no less than four. Such frost and such snow he never saw. And when the thaw came the turnips made them ill."

"Did he see the comet?"

"He's not quite sure, but he thinks he did, only he says, when one sees shooting-men five days a week, one is not in a mood to be taken up with shooting-stars at night. He was kept busy dressing his own and other rabbits' wounds. Twice he was caught by a ferret, only happily

it was muzzled and so he got off. He was hit in his body fifteen times by stray pellets, and both his ears were riddled by them more than once. And once a retriever gripped him, but the gamekeeper took him out of its mouth and tossed him in the air, and two shots were fired at him, and other two, and other two, and other two. And all he lost was his off hind-leg, and he knows six rabbits that lost two legs, and five that lost three. Yes, he says, it has been a winter of great mercies, and he has more to be thankful for than he can put in words."

The Bundle of Life

But the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God.—1. Sam. xxv. 29.

When David fled from Absalom and was come to Mahanaim, we are told that three men, Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai, brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David and for the people that were with him to eat : for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness. As one reads that list, fourteen things in all, one is struck first of all by the lavishness of their gifts, but, on reading it a second time and a third, one can see the workings of several minds, signs of consultation, and marks of haste. But when one reads the list of what Abigail prepared—200 loaves, 2 bottles of wine, and 5 sheep ready dressed, and 5 measures of parched corn, and 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 cakes of figs—one notices her orderliness, and the self-possession which enabled her at such a trying time, death threatening her and all her household, calmly and deliberately to count the various items one by one. Lord Wolseley has said that to be able to count one's fingers when one is roused at three o'clock in the morning by a

sudden alarm in time of war is a true test of courage. That is a test few men, and some would say still fewer women, could stand. Many, in Abigail's case, would have screamed and swooned, or burst into tears and clamour and wild wailing. But she, like all wise women, like all women of the highest type, kept cool in the hour of trial and difficulty, or, to use the apostle Peter's words, was not afraid with any amazement, that is, as the Revised Version translates the words, was not put in fear by any terror. Her mind was stayed on God.

Abigail is one of the most interesting and charming women in the world's history. A woman of a beautiful countenance and of good understanding, she must also have been a perfect housekeeper. Yet she was tied to a drunken churl !

In that wonderful phrase, *the bundle of life*, we see the reflection of her love of order, and the revolt of her whole nature against the galling yoke of her husband Nabal.

But the words she uses are more wonderful still—bound up in the bundle of life *with the Lord thy God*. I do not know a more remarkable expression than that in the whole Bible. God and we in one bundle ! God's life and ours, God's history and ours, bound up together ! Is not that the whole story of God's relation to us, and our relation to Him ? It is the story of redemption ; our life is hid with Christ in God ! We are as safe as God is, and we shall one day be as happy.

What a wonderful woman she must have been

who could think such a thought as that and could clothe it in such memorable words ! And she was a drunkard's wife ! And, next to being a drunkard's mother, that is one of the bitterest lots on earth.

Ten days after—and how graciously, and perhaps successfully, she pleaded with her dying husband during those last days of constant watching to be reconciled to God we can only guess—ten days after, she was a widow. Then, after fitting interval, she became David's wife, and I have no doubt helped him often in the writing of his psalms. The woman who could see so clearly into the inmost thought of God, and could utter such a phrase as that—*bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God*—we may be sure, said more than one good thing in her life.

If any girl should read these words, I hope she will be stirred up to think high thoughts, and some day, in some unexpected hour, some hour of sudden trial or great joy, the Spirit of God will come upon her in all His fulness, and she will say some memorable thing that someone shall catch up and repeat. Her speech will be, not

> The barren verbiage, current among men,
> Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment

but

> Jewels, five-words long,
> That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
> Sparkle for ever !

Our Miners

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.—John xv. 13.

In the Mauricewood Pit disaster in 1889 there perished sixty-eight men and boys. Only two escaped. Other three might easily have done so too. They were pony-drivers, but they turned back to warn the men.

Professor Lewis Campbell, of St. Andrews University, wrote an epitaph in Greek on them, which someone—I know not who—turned into our Scots tongue thus : (The first line contains the advice given by Hippolochus to his son Glaucus, a commander in the Trojan war.)

" Aye afore others put yersel,"
So spake the Grecian sire.
" Duty, bairns, must ay be mindit,
Duty through the fire—"
Is a' that's teacht to collier laddies
By working unpretending daddies.

Another writer—for the heart of all Scotland was moved at the time—pictured a meeting between the Three Boys and the Three Hundred Greek heroes who died in the Pass of Thermopylæ, fighting under Leonidas against the Persian hosts :

Three hundred men
From the Grecian glen,
All clad in shining brass,
Were standing by
With Spartan eye
To see Three Laddies pass.

Our Miners

I have reproduced this story from an old number of this magazine for this reason. We are disappointed at this time by the action of the miners, who, like some other groups of our countrymen from whom we should have looked for better things, seem to have taken a cruel advantage of their power. It is good for us to think not only of their faults but of their wrongs in times past; and good also to remember the countless heroic deeds, and the saintly lives, of many of those who have made their days nights without moon or stars that our nights might be made sunnier than summer days. There are many pits throughout our land from whose depths there daily rises the voice of praise and prayer, whose workers, forgotten indeed, as Job says (ch. 28th, R.V.), of the foot that passeth by, are God's continual remembrancers.

The Little Shop

People wondered how the Miss Montgomerys lived. They were girls just turned twenty, whose mother had recently died, after long illness. Their father had been killed in a shipbuilding yard when they were little children. Ann, the younger, was in poor health. She was clever with her needle, but there was no demand amongst those who knew her for the kind of work which she could do. Jean, the elder, would have made an ideal nurse, but nursing was not looked at then as it is now, and such nursing as she did outside her own home was done for poor neighbours. Yet somehow they were always earning a little, and what they got seemed to multiply so strangely that the younger sister was tempted at times to imagine that there must be some angels who are coiners. "It wouldn't do for them," she said, "to make pound-notes, because that would be making promises and leaving others to fulfil them; but, if the silver and gold are God's, what is to hinder an angel from making a few shillings and sixpences now and again for other people? That would not be robbing anybody." Jean was not quite sure that that was a right way to talk, but she knew it was done reverently, and certainly she agreed with Ann in this, that everything they got seemed to bring a blessing with it.

Some of the members of their congregation were

talking about them one night, and about the love the sisters had to one another. Presently the talk took another turn. One of the company had spoken of them as the Miss Montgomerys. "You should say the Misses Montgomery," replied another. "But suppose the first way was correct," said a third, who was notorious for finding bones of contention for others to sharpen their wits on, "how would you spell it? Would you say Montgom*erys*, or Montgom*ery's*, or Montgom*eries*?"

Strange to say, the sisters themselves were talking about their own name, too, that night. They had resolved, after much thought, to open a little shop, which had lain long untenanted, for the sale of fruit and vegetables. Of course, they must have a signboard. "And both our names must be on it," said Jean. "Yes," said Ann, who could be frivolous at times, "we must bed and *board* together as long as we live." So they fixed it thus:

JEAN & ANN MONTGOMERY.
FRUIT and VEGETABLES.

They fell asleep and dreamed they saw a crowd blocking the street, and gazing up at the words that looked so pretty in blue and gold.

But, alas! the dream came to nothing. For the man who was consulted told them that such a sign could not be painted, even in the cheapest colours, for less than ten shillings. "You see," he added, "if you could have brought the board to my shop, I could have done it easily, but here

I should need to bring a ladder and a boy, and it is the coming and going that take up the time, and it's the time that costs the money."

So the sisters agreed to do without a sign. After all, wouldn't people see that it was a fruit-shop without being told? "That's ten shillings in our pocket at once to begin with," said Ann.

But on the day before they opened, when she saw how poor a show their stock made, she said, "I'm afraid, Jean, we'll have to put up 'Fruit and Vegetables' after all." Yes, poor creatures, it was no great display. Ann did her best, and never, I am certain, did so little look so much, or look so well. But, in spite of it all, aye, even in spite of two looking-glasses—the lawfulness of using which slightly troubled both the sisters—which at the first glance doubled and quadrupled the contents, the window did look forlorn.

They got up early on the Wednesday, the day they had fixed for opening on, took down their shutters, and after each sister had gone out and up and down the street, trying to look as if she were a stranger passing the window by chance, they took a scanty breakfast and then had worship, in which they commended themselves and their new venture to God, not without tears. Then they put a shilling and a sixpence and a threepenny piece, and six pennies and six halfpennies in the little bowl in their till, in case they should need change, and so waited for custom, and for what God might send.

They opened at seven, and at five minutes past were vexed by a loud burst of laughter at

their door. It was only two men talking about something else, but the sisters thought it was aimed at them, and, though many years have passed since then, they still flush at the remembrance of it.

At eight o'clock a child came in and asked what o'clock it was? They were greatly pleased when the child said, "Thank you." It was the first word uttered by a stranger in their shop, and, when Jean said, "You are a polite little boy," Ann added, "Give him an apple." The boy is now a head master, and often tells the story, and his pupils bid fair to be as gentlemanly as himself.

At ten o'clock a woman came in and asked for a penny lemon for a neighbour, a Mrs. Yellowlees, who was very ill. The sisters had no lemons, but suggested an orange. It was a lemon she particularly wished. "But, in case you can't get one, here's an orange for her, and we'll give it you for nothing, and I hope she'll get better, poor body."

At 12.15 a big burly tramp, who had already made two shillings that day, came in to beg, but after looking round the shop with a look of contempt (which Jean remembers to this day) went out without a word.

At 1.5, when the school play-hour came, two boys came in, while other two and a girl stood at the door, and asked for a pennyworth of sweeties. Jean asked if his mother told him to buy sweeties, or was the penny not for his "piece"? The boy said it was for his "piece." "Then,"

said Jean, "it would not be right, my mannie, for me to sell them to you. You must go to the baker's and buy what your mother gave you the penny for."

At 3.20 a woman came in and asked if they knew where a Mrs. Greenshields lived, "or a name like that."

"It can't be that Mrs. Yellowlees round the corner?" said Ann.

"That's the very name," answered the woman, "and I have been trying to find her out all afternoon, and I have come all the way from Dumfries. Her husband and my husband are second-cousins. I'm greatly obliged to you."

At 4.50 a commercial traveller asked if they could oblige him with a penny stamp.

At 6.25 another man asked if they sold the evening newspapers.

At 6.45 a woman came in and sought change for half a crown.

At 7 some children gathered round the window, and began to play at a spelling game. "A.," one of them would cry, followed instantly by a shriek of "Apples!" and a hurry-scurry across the street and back. "O." "Oranges!" "C." "Cabbages!" "No." "Cauliflowers!" "Yes."

The sisters were greatly pleased at this. They had actually, without knowing it, started a shop, and a free school, and a place of public entertainment all in one. But soon came another trial.

"G. P.," shouted a boy. "Gooseberry Pie!" guessed another, who, even while he said it, had time to reflect with pain that he had eaten very

few gooseberries that summer, and now it was too late. The gooseberry season was past.

What "G. P." was, even Ann could not make out, unless it was "Gas Pipe!" And gas pipe it was, for, as the boy explained to his companions, it was the only other thing in the window he could see.

At 7.40 the sisters put up their shutters and closed their shop to go to the prayer-meeting. They had rarely felt so much in need of going. On their way to it, they could not help noticing how full the windows of other shopkeepers were compared with theirs. They observed, too, though in silence, the different legends stuck indiscriminately here and there; "Try this"; "Best Value in Town"; "Can't be Beat."

They went blushing to their seat, thinking everyone was looking at them. But at prayer-meetings, as a rule, people are very kindly, and very willing to bear others' burdens, for they have all burdens of their own. They came away cheered by the last psalm. It was the 146th—

> The stranger's shield, the widow's stay,
> The orphan's help is He.

Then after worship, at which they both broke down at the singing, they lay down. Somehow they could talk more freely in the dark. They confessed that the day had been a little disappointing. Then they sang the psalm that had comforted them right through. Next, they began to laugh. Ann was in a rollicking mood. Even Jean began to be humorous, and said they had

forgotten to take stock, and " we didn't write up our books either." As she fell asleep, the last words she heard were, " One Trial will Suffice " ; " Can't be Beat."

But an hour after she awoke her sister and said, " Ann, are you sure it was a half-crown that woman gave us ? Was it not a two-shilling piece ? " Then they had another laugh and another cry. But joy came in the morning, and ever since. They had given God the first fruits, and all the fruits, of their first day, and it looks as if from that day to this God has been saying, " It is My turn now, and I must pay you back."

Run With The Boat

"It is hoped that all who can will run with the Boat during the Eights."

EVERY year, towards the end of May, the twenty-one colleges that make up Oxford University contend with one another for what is called "the headship of the river." Each boat has eight oarsmen besides a coxswain or steersman, and the races go on for six days: hence the name—*The Eights Week.*

Each college may send as many boats as it can man. All send one, some two, and one this year sent three, so that there were 31 in all. As the river Isis, for so that part of the Thames which flows past Oxford is called, is narrow, and the course is only a mile and a quarter long, the races are run each day in three divisions at different hours. The boats are arranged in one long column, 130 feet apart. A cannon is fired, and off they go, each trying to make up on the one in front, and to keep ahead of the one behind. When a boat makes up on another—and it must actually touch it, else it doesn't count—it is said to make a "bump." When a boat is bumped, its coxswain holds up his hand, and his comrades instantly row to the bank, to be out of the way of the boats that follow. The boat that has made the bump may row on if it chooses and make another

bump if it can. One boat last year made nine bumps in the six days, and got up, as it were, nine places. When a boat gets to the head of the lower, or middle division, it rows the next day last in the division above it, so that a boat can pass from one class into another. Each day they all start in the order in which they left on the day before, and sometimes a boat regains the place it had lost. Some days there are a good many bumps, some days there are but few, but there are always some.

The Oxfordshire or left bank of the river is partly cut up by tributary streams, and partly lined with large handsome barges owned by the various college rowing clubs. But on the Berkshire bank there is a clear path, and along it, while the races are in progress, the undergraduates run in hundreds, roaring, blowing trumpets, ringing bells, firing pistols, whirling huge clappers, to encourage each his own college boat. And that is the meaning of the words at the head of this article, copied from the notice-board of Exeter College a few weeks ago.

When the race is over, many of the students, too eager to wait for the ferry-boats, dash into the river as they are, and walk home, all dripping, to the amusement of the thousands who fill the streets and paths.

. . . . . .

There are battles in God's service in which all that we can do is to be lookers-on. But we are not to sulk because we are not asked to row. If others are to do the rowing, we can go and see

them off, and wish them speed ; but it is better, if we can, to run with them and cheer them all the way, from start to finish. If your minister, for example, has a small prayer-meeting or anything else that makes work hard, stand by him and keep him company, not only in the cold dark nights of winter, but in the clear warm days of summer. And when he finishes his course and wins his prize, there will be a prize for you.

Remember Paul's lament : " Only Luke is with me. At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me : may it not be laid to their account." And remember our Lord's promise : " Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations ; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as My Father appointed unto Me."

Wherefore, " It is hoped that all who can will run with the Boat."

The Tomtits

Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?—Matt. VI. 26 (R.V.).

WHEN Mr. John Addington Symonds, the critic, was a child, he tells us in his *Autobiography* he once brought some confusion on his elder sisters at a children's party. Thinking himself neglected at table, he pointed to a cake, and said, "I never ask, but I points." A little bird said the very same thing to me the other day.

I had often heard that the Tomtit, or Titmouse, or Blue Cap—for it has all these *aliases* and others besides—dearly loves a cocoa-nut. If one wishes cocoa-nuts, however, one must not wait till December to buy them, and that unfortunately was what I did year after year. "The Fair-time is the time for them," the shopkeepers told me with a smile, and I alas! was always too late for the Fair. But the year before last I remembered my old resolve in time, though just in time, for October had come, and carried one home one day in triumph. When the first frosts came I sawed off its ends, and hung it up under a little arch made by two laburnum trees, and then waited impatiently for the guests, of whose existence I knew as little as I did of their whereabouts. One day passed—no tits. Two days passed—no tits.

Three days—no sign of them, till the late afternoon, and there they were, hurrah ! male and female, after their kind.

This winter I was wiser, though not much, and laid in a stock of three in September.

When the frost came for a morning or two, eight weeks ago, I again prepared a feast for the birds. No need to wait this time for tardy or unwilling guests. In two-and-a-half hours there they were, in all the glory of their yellow, green, and blue apparel, like a little King Ahasuerus bringing his queen Vashti to the banquet, eager to show her beauty.

As the days went on one could see the kernel gradually disappearing. The tits, when they came, no longer clung outside the door, but went bodily inside to eat the flooring and the roofing of their tiny banquet-hall. Soon all but the last fragments disappeared.

One has seen a boy, forgetful for the moment of his manners, ostentatiously scraping his plate or draining his cup to show his mother that he would fain ask for more, and so it was with these hungry birds, only in a dainty, well-bred way. They would peer into the hollow nut, one at a time, and look round—with an eye to any possible beholder—as much as to say, " Come and see this here celestial ball, and list to the murmur of the shell, for Vashti and I have thoroughly polished the beams and made them resonant, and the house is now swept and garnished ; come and see how clean and how, ahem ! convex and concave it is ! "

An appeal like that, one could not, of course, resist. One of these late wild mornings, when the sun shone out for a moment or two between the blasts of sleet and hail, I ran out a little four-foot pole from the window with a fresh nut dangling from the end. And this time, in less than four minutes there was little Vashti! Like a good housewife she had come out marketing and found a new source of supplies. Outstripping all explorers she had not only discovered the pole, but a new, undreamt-of world revolving round it. Taking but two pecks, as a sample of its produce, she hastened, unlike Vashti, to her lord and master.

"King Ahasuerus! live for ever!"

"What are you wanting now, Vashti?"

"I'm not wanting anything. I've found something. Something good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a thing to be desired to make one wise. Guess!"

"A caterpillar?"

"No, you stup—endously great king, but a whole new cocoa-nut!"

"Consider yourself a prisoner here till I come back," was all he said.

And there presently was the king himself. And he couldn't deny that it was a cocoa-nut, and a charming one, and such a lovely russet colour, too, as made the other empty nut look like an old sodden leathern bag. But, whether he took the end of a binocular for the muzzle of a double-barrelled gun, or feared the face of the clock, or disliked the titles of some of the books—for all

these things he could see through the window—or whether the vibration of the pole distressed him—for there is as much difference between that and the spring of a tree as there is between the sweet motion of a sailing ship and the quiver of a torpedo boat—which of all these things alarmed him, I say I do not know. But neither he nor she came back for long. Only he came after a time, and, affecting to be busy with the old nut, watched the new one in search of developments. Then, late in the day, he bravely tried the new one once more, and being satisfied went home as hastily as a king may who never forgets his dignity. Then he held out the golden sceptre, metaphorically, to Queen Vashti in token that she was restored to favour. And, from that hour to this, they take their turns at the nut, each pleased to come and as pleased to go.

Did I tell you that, like all Eastern potentates, Ahasuerus is a dreamer? He had a great dream two nights ago.

He dreamt he saw four beetles. The first was very brown and very thin, such as he never saw for thinness. The second was thin too, but not quite so thin. The third was fat and well-favoured and rich-coloured, yet, even as he looked at it, it seemed to pine and waste away. But the fourth was the largest and fattest and blackest beetle he had ever seen, and it galloped like a motor-car.

He awoke in consternation. Then he roused poor little Vashti, told her his dream, and added, 'And, if you don't tell me the interpretation of it

before the last star disappears, I'll peck you into titbits ? "

Vashti lay quaking for a little, her feathers all on end, but in two minutes she looked up and smiled, and said : " That is a wonderful dream. I don't know any other bird that has such dreams as you."

" Quite true," he said ; " but that is not the point. You are trying to gain time. Tell me the meaning of it. And quickly. I see but three stars now. The sands are running out."

Then his little queen made haste to answer : " The four beetles are four cocoa-nuts. The first that lay upon its back, and was so thin it was nothing but a shell, is the nut we ate long long ago, that is now dried up and empty. The second is the nut we got two moons ago. The third which pined and wasted is that which we now enjoy from day to day. And the fourth which was black and fat and flew like a Panhard motor-car is a nut we are to get—the biggest and sweetest one you ever saw—when our present one is done, one that shall last us, if all is well, till the spring-time and the caterpillars come again."

And Vashti was quite right ! But wasn't it very clever of her ?

The Raspberry-Pickers

But many shall be last that are first; and first that are last.—Matt. XIX. 30 (R.V.)

CHAPTER I

Miss Martha Singlewood was an English lady who had been settled for some years in the outskirts of a little town in Scotland. She had lent most of her money to her favourite nephew, a handsome lad with a winning way, "and he always wore such neat boots and gloves!" and with some people these cover a multitude of sins. Lending, nine cases out of ten, means losing, and so it was with Miss Singlewood. She had a little piece of ground right round her cottage, about 1,200 square yards in all, or nearly the fifth of a Scotch acre. There were two or three low trees in it, about 30 or 40 gooseberry bushes, some beds filled chiefly with roses, but it was her rasps she was proudest of. They had come originally from her old home in Kent, and there must have been nearly 200 bushes.

CHAPTER II

In the season of our story rasps threatened to be scarce, but Miss Singlewood's somehow promised to be better than ever, and well for her it was so,

for she needed money. But how to gather them was the difficulty. She herself could not do it ; lumbago had settled that. The raspberry crop is a lingering one, though lingering is hardly the right word to use of a harvest whose mercies are fresh every morning for five or six weeks on end. But there was only work for an hour or so each day, and no woman could be got to come for that.

CHAPTER III

" I know a tenement in which there are about a dozen children," said a young lady friend to whom Miss Singlewood had been telling her difficulty. " They have got their holidays, and, if you asked them all to come out and do an hour's work, you could perhaps find one or two smart ones whom you could ask regularly. You would have to allow them to eat some as well as to gather, but, if you were to offer a prize for the heaviest basket, that might keep them from eating too many."

And wasn't there great joy in that tenement when twelve children were told to come out next day to Miss Singlewood's and do an hour's work at picking raspberries ? The lady would furnish the baskets, and would not object to their eating some berries, provided they gathered two for every one they ate ; every child would get a penny and in addition there would be a prize of threepence for the heaviest basket, and another for the cleanest picked, and perhaps a third for anything specially meritorious that might occur.

RUTH TO THE RESCUE

CHAPTER IV

The children all turned up in time, most of them an hour before it, and waited till the gate was opened. Some of them had their mothers with them, amongst these being a little weak-minded deformed child known as Silly Wee Hughie. That he should win a prize was, of course, out of the question, but his mother begged hard that he might be allowed to try ; it would do him good ; he could be put in a little corner by himself where he would be in nobody's way ; she herself would show him what he was to do, and then she would go to the gate and wait for him ; she could promise he would be obedient and would do no damage.

CHAPTER V

When the gong was sounded at ten minutes past eleven, the children fell to with a will. The young lady who had brought them kept order in the garden, while Miss Singlewood wandered slowly from room to room and watched the busy bees, and wasps, and drones, below her. And what a world of character there was !

The busiest pickers seemed to be two big boys. They were quick on their feet, they had a long reach, and, thinking of no one but themselves, pushed like the fat cattle of which Ezekiel tells us—ch. xxxiv—and thrust with side and shoulder. One or other was certain of the prize for quantity.

Two girls accused a third of stealing from their stores. They found her lifting their baskets ;

she said it was only to feel their weight. They withdrew their charge—only to repeat it on the way home and every day for a fortnight after—but meantime each of the three lost minutes that could not be recalled.

A fourth, Matilda Ann Joy, seeing she was beaten by her neighbour, ate steadily for twenty minutes, and, as they say of golfers who find themselves early out of the running, " tore up her card," gave in an almost empty basket, and, saying she had the toothache, set off for home.

Ruth Bellamy, a little orphan English girl but newly come to Scotland, as neat and clever in her movements as a fly-catcher, might have won the prize for weight, I think, had she not happened to notice a blackbird, with bleeding wings and legs, entangled in thread that had been stretched over a gooseberry bush by which it had been caught. The prisoner's ransoming and her subsequent endearments and caresses cost her full ten minutes.

But the hardest worker of all, and the honestest, was little Mary Sibbald. She ate only a few broken or imperfect berries and one or two that were soiled with falling on the ground, and it seemed somehow so unkind to leave them there to waste !

CHAPTER VI

Now I told you about the two big selfish boys. But I didn't tell you they were clever, too. For they both had mothers that prided themselves on being " deep." And *they* were deep ! For,

catching sight of Mary Sibbald's basket as they danced about, they saw that neither could compete with her, but that jointly they could beat her. So they put all they had gathered into one basket. But, first of all, they looked this way and that way, and every way but the right way, and that was upwards, for Miss Singlewood happened by chance to look in their direction and saw the whole manœuvre. Then, seeing the fulness of the basket might excite suspicion—for, remember, they were *deep*, deeper than you have any idea of—they ate a good many, and put some in their pockets, and still had a fine show left. And then one of them, I think he was the deeper of the two, slipped cunningly over the dyke, so cunningly, for I tell you he was just no end deep, that only five people saw him do it. And it needs only *two* witnesses to condemn anybody !

CHAPTER VII

At ten minutes past twelve the gong called the labourers to receive their hire. Miss Singlewood had struggled down stairs, and everyone, beginning from the first to the last, received, like the men in the Bible, each a penny. But the clever boy received two ! And this is how it was :

He had made up a story—for I think I told you he was deep—to this effect, that the other boy's mother had come and cried over the wall that he was to come home because his father had been hurt in an accident, and here was his basket, empty—but stained (he hadn't noticed that).

"Well," said Miss Singlewood, "it was very kind of you to bring his berries with your own. Will you kindly give him his penny from me?"

Everybody meantime had forgotten Silly Wee Hughie, for you see he had no chance whatever. But it is not the first time the weak things of the world have been chosen to confound the mighty, and so it was here. For the little creature, in a perfect ecstasy of delight—the red colour had specially appealed to him and had stirred his soul like a trumpet—had worked without a moment's halt, and by his mother's orders had eaten none!

He beat Mary Sibbald by half an ounce! But she got the prize for the cleanest gathering, and Ruth Bellamy the one for the most meritorious action of the day, for Miss Singlewood had seen her setting the captive free.

CHAPTER VIII

The happiest person of all that day was Hughie's mother, and as she carried her little laddie home she blessed God all the way for making her his mother.

And the two maddest people that day were the two clever mothers of the too clever sons. The boys had met immediately after the distribution of the prizes to divide the spoil, and they got into grips, forgetting the berries in their pockets, and fought and fell and rolled over each other again and again, and, when their mothers saw the state their jackets and their trousers were in when they came home, they gave them what one of the

mothers called a jubilee thrashing, such a thrashing as could only be twice in a century, but the sting of the thrashing was in the oft-repeated refrain, "And to think such a clever boy was beaten by Silly Wee Hughie!"

As for Mary, Ruth, and Hughie, they were established in their posts, and, like Ruth's great namesake in the fields of Boaz, they kept fast by Miss Singlewood to the end of the raspberry harvest.

CHAPTER IX

And it's gooseberry harvest now! and the three little mighties are still picking away.

The Shortest Chapter in the Bible

WHEN I was a boy I was taught to read a chapter every morning and every evening, and I am ashamed to say I very often read the 117th Psalm. It has only two verses, but it counted as a chapter all the same !

Now there is no special virtue in reading neither more nor less than a chapter. I think it a good plan to read a verse for every year you have lived. If you are six, read six ; if you are twelve, read twelve. Some days you will be so interested you will read far more ; and by God's blessing when you grow up you will often read a great many chapters, maybe a whole book, without stopping.

There is another curious thing about the 117th Psalm. It is the *middle* chapter in the Bible as well as the *shortest.* There are 1,189 chapters altogether, and it is the 595th ; there are 594 on either side of it. The Bible was not divided into chapters till about the year 1250. It was only then that it began to be greatly read and studied, and that a division into chapters was seen to be necessary in order that people might easily find the place. It is therefore only by a kind of chance, so to speak, that this psalm is the middle chapter. Yet surely after all it was God's doing. It deserves the place. Let us just read it :

The Shortest Chapter in the Bible

O give ye praise unto the Lord,
All nations that be;
Likewise, ye people all, accord
His Name to magnify.
For great to usward ever are
His loving-kindnesses:
His truth endures for evermore.
The Lord O do ye bless.

You see it contains an invitation to you and me, and everybody, to love God; and it contains a description of God's love to us. Boys and girls dearly love to get to the top of a hill. They wish to see what is on the other side of it; they wish to look all around.

So this psalm is just like the central ridge, and the highest peak, in the Bible. And when we climb up and look before and after, and all round, north, and south, and east, and west, what do we see? Nothing but the love of God. "His mercy is great toward us; and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever"; goodness and mercy from everlasting to everlasting.

I heard of a girl recently who said to her little brother, "I'm going away to leave you." Then, when he began to cry, she said, "Oh, yes, I'm going away; you have not been very kind to me." "Oh, but," he said, "*you* have been very kind to *me*."

And isn't that true about God? We have not been kind to Him, but He has ever been kind to us.

A Pillow

And He was asleep on a pillow.—Mark IV. 38.

When Dr. Samuel Johnson was dying, one of his friends, a Mr. Windham, a young man of high birth, arranged his pillow for him. "Thank you," said the old man, "that will do—all that a pillow can do."

There are many things that a pillow can do, and one of them is this: it is a revealer of character. It shows our age, our nationality, our upbringing, our surroundings, our manners, our state of health, alike of body and mind and soul. We spend at least one-third of our lives with our heads on pillows of one kind or another, and when we think of that may we not well ask, What is there about us that a pillow does not know? What is there that it could not prove? Just as one look at our Lord's last resting-place made Peter see that He was "risen" indeed, and that He was the Lord of glory, so one glimpse at us as we lie down, and sleep, and dream, and wake, might well show what manner of men we are.

A pillow, too, could tell a great deal about the love of those who are round about us. When we lie down to rest for a little when we are tired during the day, or in the early evening, we often show our thoughtlessness and selfishness. We choose the best seat and the attitude that is most

comfortable for ourselves ; we fall asleep holding the book or newspaper that every other body is anxious to read. But Christ never did anything like that. When they took Him into the ship that day, " as He was," utterly weary and worn out, we may be sure it was not He Himself who put the steersman's cushion under His head. That was done either by the disciples when He lay down, or after He had lain down and had fallen asleep. Just as, when a man awakes after a little nap, he finds that his wife or mother has put a plaid or a shawl round his shoulders or over his feet to keep him from catching cold and make his rest the more refreshing, so our Lord was pleased when He awoke with the love they had shown Him while he slept.

So will it be with us hereafter. All the kind things we ourselves did that no one noticed at the time, and all the kindly things, more than we ever dreamed of, that were done to us—all of them alike shall be made known, " proclaimed upon the house-top."

The Bramble-Slasher

One day when a young companion on a walk amused himself by slashing off the juicy tops of the brambles in the hedge with his walking-stick, the late Dr. Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury, stopped him sharply. "Don't do that: it's breaking the Third Commandment!"

When Dr. Benson made that remark no doubt the young man was greatly astonished. A little thought would show him that he was doing a useless thing, and a wrong thing, but what had slashing brambles to do with the Third Commandment? He wasn't speaking, much less swearing, or saying bad words! How then could he be taking God's Name in vain? And one may be sure that that is what he would say to the Archbishop.

But if that lad had learnt the Shorter Catechism in his childhood, he would instantly have said to himself—What is required in the Third Commandment? and then, What is forbidden in the Third Commandment? And he would have repeated the answer in his mind—"The Third Commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh Himself known." That is one advantage in being brought up a Presbyterian! We are "rooted and grounded" in the faith. Indeed, I am pretty sure Dr. Benson himself had got his knowledge of

what the Third Commandment means either directly or indirectly from that very Shorter Catechism.

A bramble-berry, like every other berry, is one of God's works. It is good for food, and a delight to the eyes, and it grows in waste places, and by the roadside, for poor and weary travellers, and it costs nothing, and it comes late in the year, just before winter, when the harvest is all over and the time of other fruits is past, and it is full of humour, for it plays hide-and-seek, and smiles and beams out of the darkness on the diligent that find it. Yes, there is a lot of love in the making of a bramble-bush, and that is how it is one of the things "by which God maketh Himself known," that is, shows us what He is.

Oh, the Bramble-bush is the poor man's tree
For it loves the king's high road,
And none dare say, "It belongeth to me,"
For it roams like the winds of God.
Oh, the Bramble-bush for me!

Oh, the Bramble-bush is the Bairnies' tree,
For it loves to trail on the ground,
And by little or big, whatever you be,
There are berries to be found.
Oh, the Bramble-bush for me!

And the Bramble-bush is like God's own tree,
'Tis a place where dwells Goodwill;
For its thorns are hands that say, "Come, see,
Eat every one your fill."
Oh, the Bramble-bush for me!

But the bramble-tree improves by cultivation.

I knew a man once one of whose hobbies it was to gather every kind and variety of bramble he could find or hear of, and in his grounds he had specimens of bushes from every part of Europe.

But the special beauty of the bramble as of every other tree is this : Its thorns remind us of Paradise Lost, but its fruit tells us that Paradise has been regained. Every green leaf, every flower, every whistling bird, every drop of water in the world, proves that the great gulf between us and God is not only not yet " fixed," but has been bridged by Christ ; they all prove to us that God is still in the world, and that He is not far from any one of us. Everything God gives us brings with it an offer of Christ and His salvation. The God Who gives us these little things wishes to give us more, wishes to give us everything He has.

Leap-Frog

Walking, and leaping, and praising God.—Acts III. 8.

LEAP-FROG well played is a pretty game, and I have always admired and envied those that are good at it. It gets its name from the fact, which many do not seem to know, that it is real literal frogs that have taught boys how to play it. I remember my own astonishment at seeing, for the first time, some little frogs giving each other a "back," and vaulting over one another's shoulders, one summer day on the margin of a shallow sandy pool. It is one of the things, like the capers of a kitten, or the antics of a monkey, or the braying of an ass, which God has made His creatures do in order that men may laugh, and take courage, when they are cast down.

How often and how long the frogs play at this game I have not been able to find out. Perhaps like our games, it runs but a short season; perhaps it is a sport for the slim and supple only, but in any case we may be sure the players get great enjoyment out of it, walking and leaping and praising God. For every kind of beasts and of birds and of fishes has its time to play as well as its time to work. You remember the Psalm:

> Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
> Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
> Both small and great beasts.
> There go the ships;
> There is leviathan, whom Thou hast formed to take his pastime therein.—*Ps.* CIV. 25 (*R.V.*)

What pastimes do whales engage in, I wonder ! Perhaps, when they are little, if they are ever little, they " go in and out the icebergs," or try who can spout and blow loudest and highest ; perhaps, when they get older, they try long-distance dives, or see who can go farthest with one flap, two flaps, three flaps of their tails, or aim at lowering the record for 100, 300, or 1,000 miles. Or perhaps every year they have an International Championship Race from Cape Farewell in Greenland, up Baffin Bay, round the North Pole, keeping the Pole on their right hand or starboard side, then south and right round Iceland, keeping it on the left, thence round the most easterly of the Faroe Islands, and home to the starting point. Or, perhaps, when the love of frolic has passed into the love of adventure, there are brave and plucky whales, Franklins and M'Clintocks and Greelys and Nansens, that try who will go farthest south, and hope some day to touch the equator and feel the heat of the line, and gaze, if only for one moment, at a " vertical sun ! "

Land Still to be Possessed

There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.—Joshua XIII. 1.

WHEN Martin Frobisher, one of the great Elizabethan seamen, set out in the *Gabriel* of 20 tons in the hope of discovering the North-West Passage to the East, we are told that "he knew that to be the only thing of the world that was left yet undone, whereby a notable mind might be made famous and fortunate."

Perhaps there are some young people who think, now that both the North Pole and the South Pole have been discovered, that there are no more heroic tasks, or equally heroic tasks, for men to do. But, just as there have been brave men since Frobisher, so there will be brave men after Nansen and Peary and Amundsen and Scott. There are vast regions of the earth's surface yet to be explored, great lakes to be discovered, mighty rivers up which no European ship has ever sailed, and all the highest mountains in the world are yet waiting for men to stand upon their peaks. When all these things have been accomplished, there are still the seas to be bridged, and the ocean beds to be traversed, and the winds to be harnessed.

And, after this world has been made subject to man, there are realms of space which man perhaps may not approach, yet into which God means him to look with wondering eyes.

But even this world itself will never be fully known. Every thought of God is a great deep. In our own day we have seen new elements discovered in the familiar air we breathe, and doubtless, all around us, there are still marvels in earth and fire and light and sound and every tree and every herb awaiting their discoverer. There will always be adventures for the adventurous,

> Fights for the fearless, and goals for the eager,
> Twenty, and thirty, and forty years on.

As long as God gives men talents, there will be chances for trading with them. And, as long as the Holy Ghost is poured out on men, there will be fruits worthy of the Spirit of all grace.

Thomas Boston, who wrote *The Fourfold State*, was afraid when he was a boy that the number of God's chosen ones, the 144,000 spoken of in the Book of Revelation, was already made up, and that he had come into the world too late. We know that to the last moment "yet there is room" for all who truly seek God's face. And, just as there will always be room for the returning sinner, there will always be a place, and a big place, for the saint who wants to work. The grandest books in the world, in theology, science, poetry, history, travel, are all yet to be written. And, if any of you are looking for a world to conquer, *there are still many languages into which the Bible has to be translated.*

That is a chance for you. And here is another: *the highest attainments in grace have all still to be reached!*

The Raging Bee

CHAPTER I

JEANIE RENDLESHAW and her two companions, after helping their mothers as much as they could in the house one Saturday morning in May, had got leave to go out and play for an hour at skipping-rope. It was a dull chilly morning after three lovely warm days. They were just beginning their game when they noticed a great big bumble-bee lying on the pavement, evidently overcome with cold, not dead, but how near to death they could not say. They were afraid to touch it, partly because they might hurt it, and partly because they feared it might hurt them.

They were wondering what they were to do, when Jeanie, who had always her wits about her, saw a clean bit of paper lying on the street, and near it a feather from a young crow's wing. (That young crow got a thrashing from its hot-tempered mother for losing the feather, the third it had lost in two days; but that is "another story" that does not concern us at present.) With the paper Jeanie made a little bag, and then with the feather very gently swept the bee into it, and took it home to her mother, her companions going with her.

Perhaps it was the motion of their running, perhaps the shelter of the bag, most likely from

the warmth that came from two little hands and three loving hearts—but so it was, the bee began to revive and come to itself, and then you should have heard the noise it made with its wings as they vibrated hundreds and hundreds of times—I can't tell you how many—in a minute. Books tell us that, if a man could speak as loudly as a grasshopper can in comparison to his size as compared with it, he could be heard quite easily in Petrograd if he spoke in Edinburgh. Happily there are so many other kinds of voices in the world that God has given us—written words, and kindly gifts, and delightful memories—that we do not need to shake the world with a voice of thunder in order to be heard ; the still small voice that God has given us is all we need. But that bee did make such a noise that an engineer would have said it reminded him of the uproar a torpedo-destroyer makes when she is undergoing some of her steam trials, as she lies firmly moored by stout hawsers alongside a quay-wall.

CHAPTER II

When the little paper bag was emptied on the table the bee, for all the noise it had been making, lay very still and helpless for a little Then Jeanie got some finely sifted sugar, and poured it in front of it, some of it falling on the little invalid's back. That roused it a bit. Perhaps it reminded it of the hail or the tiny snowflakes it had seen the week before. But at any rate it cleared it all off, and then, without tasting one particle of it,

suddenly made a dash for the window, and, of course, knocked its head against the pane, and fell down on the floor.

Poor little Jeanie was greatly grieved at this. She was sure it must have knocked its brains out, and bees have a lot of brains ! or at least have cracked its skull, or dislocated its neck. But, whether it is that bees and other insects have reversible brakes of enormous power that they can put on in the hundredth part of a moment, or that their necks are like the long patent fixed buffers that we see at the great railway termini, I do not know, but certainly they stand knocks that would do for you and me.

Jeanie lifted the poor creature once more with the feather—-and strange to say it was at that very instant the little crow that had lost it was getting another thrashing, for its mother was in a bad mood that day—and, as that moment the sun shone out, she opened the window wide, and out and away like a flying machine went the bee, as if it had been fired from a cannon !

CHAPTER III

And it had neither said, nor felt, " Thank you ! " Worse than that, it was as angry—one dare not say as angry as a Christian, for that would be impossible—but as angry as a wasp, and that, we know, is very bad. Oh, if you had but seen that bee's face, the wrinkles on its brow, and the passion and hatred in its eyes ! Several birds and a great many little insects noticed it, and

spoke of it for days afterwards. One bird remembered it two whole years.

And, as for the bee itself, it fretted and fumed and raged all day, and had not a civil word for anybody, and suspected everybody of all kinds of insults and injuries, and harped about the cruel wrongs it had received from three wicked, wicked little girls, and wished that it had a hundred stings, each of them one-and-a-half inches long, to stick into them, and that would be a lesson to them not to meddle with the like of it in the future! And the bee didn't know, and never suspected, that these three little girls were three Good Samaritans, and that, but for them, it would have been a frozen corpse, and would have missed the finest summer and the best honey season there had been for three generations—generations of bees, of course, I mean.

Oh, how it raged, and how, one way and another, it made every other bee it met rage, that day! I don't suppose many of you have ever seen a bear robbed of her whelps, but, if you have, that bear would have reminded you of that bee!

CHAPTER IV

And the moral of the story, though some of you, perhaps, didn't want the moral, is simply this: You and I are that raging bee! Many a day God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Ghost do us great kindnesses, keeping our feet from falling and our eyes from tears and our souls from death, that we may walk now and

for ever in the light of the living ; and we not only give God no thanks, but we count Him our unceasing enemy.

Did you ever read in the first chapter of Deuteronomy the cruel thing the Israelites said ? "Because the Lord *hated* us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt." Because the Lord *hated* us ! That Lord Whose Name, Whose greatest Name is—Love !

The Northern Lights

Most of us have seen at night the strange light in the north which we call the Aurora Borealis, and have been filled with wonder and awe as we watched it quivering, slowly spreading, instantly disappearing, or again darting rays like lightning, while the heavens flushed, now here, now there, as if someone were signalling, not to us, but to some other, "from the back of beyond."

Dr. Nansen in his book, "Farthest North," has given some beautiful drawings of this strange phenomenon as witnessed by him and his brave comrades. Artists, who have seen his original sketches in London, speak very highly of them, specially of the way in which he has represented the heliotrope and opalescent tints. His word-descriptions of what he saw are not less striking and vivid. So curious were the sights, he says, that it often seemed to him as if he had left this globe and gone to some other world. "Yellow, green, ruby, red, the lights flashed in matchless beauty. It looked as if a fiery serpent were writhing itself all over the sky; then presently it would split into three: surely the heavens are about to fall!"

These wonderful appearances, men of science say, are electric discharges connected with magnetic disturbance. Do we not well to look on them also as proofs of God's power and love?

The Northern Lights

In the Polar regions there is no sun, no day, for several months, and God has, therefore, made night more beautiful, giving more abundant honour to that part which lacked. But, if there are no men to see these lights, why does He put them there? Is it not partly because He Himself is there? and partly because He is waiting there for men to come to Him? He lights His lamp and opens His window, as a loving mother does who is wearying for her boy and watching, "while he is yet a great way off." Does He not also show us how much light and glory and power He has, and to spare? We restrain Him, by our sin and want of faith, from working. He has all power in Heaven and in earth. He wishes to use it all for us, but we will not let Him. We have banished from our midst and made to dwell far off the King of Glory, Who rejoices in the habitable parts of the earth, Whose delights have been from everlasting with the sons of men. Our Beloved, Whose wish it was to spread His skirts over us, has withdrawn Himself and is gone. And yet He has left the hem of His garment within our reach, and if we but touch it He will come back to us.

A Rose's Leaves

THE other day a friend took a Gloire de Dijon, and asked three of his household to guess how many leaves it had. One said 300, another 79, and the third 120. When counted there were 97. Two other roses, the common old-fashioned Cabbage-rose of happy memory, and a Malmaison, were then chosen and their leaves also counted ; the one had 93 and the other 104.

What the uses of the leaves are it would take a botanist and a poet and an angel and a bee to tell us. But they are good no doubt for the warming and protecting and moistening of the seeds that lie in their keeping.

Over a hundred wrappings and trappings for one flower ! If God then so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe us, O we of little faith ?

I wonder how many wraps King Solomon put on, the coldest day he ever had in Jerusalem or on the mountains of Lebanon. Yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

You have read, I hope, in such books as the *Scots Worthies* and *Men of the Covenant* how Alexander Peden the Covenanter, when the soldiers were on the point of capturing him in the hills one day, cried out to God, " Cast the lap of Thy cloak, Lord, over puir auld Sandy " ; and

the mist came down and shrouded him. How many laps are there in God's cloak? How many feathers in His wing? We all need a hiding-place, alike for body, soul and spirit. How many arrows there are that fly by day! And there is pestilence that walketh in darkness. Our cares and anxieties are many. Strong bulls of Bashan surround us. Many there be which say of our souls, There is no help for him in God.

Beware of going to the wrong shelter, of trusting to any coverings of your own making, however strong or pretty they may look. Every one of them is narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it. For so God warns us, Isaiah xxx. 1: Woe to the rebellious children that take counsel but not of Me, that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

Do you remember what Satan said to God about Job? Hast Thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and all that he hath on every side? So God makes a hedge about us. One hedge? Nay, says Dr. Smellie, in his book, *In the Hour of Silence*, "there is a whole labyrinth of hedges. His providence is a hedge. Every Christian friend is a hedge. The ministry of angels—how many soever they be—is a hedge. The call of the Spirit to conversion, to purity, to service, to assurance and joy, is a hedge. But His grace in Christ is the best of hedges.

Yet all these fences and their whole array
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.

Cæsar

At the age of 56 Cæsar was murdered on the Ides, that is, the 15th, of March, B.C. 44. The previous evening, while he was at supper, the conversation turned on death, and on the kind of death which was most to be desired. Cæsar, who was signing papers while the rest were talking, looked up and said, "A sudden one." During the night his wife, Calpurnia, dreamt that he was murdered. In the morning he himself was restless and depressed, and at her entreaty decided not to attend the Senate that day. But at eleven o'clock the conspirators, who had been waiting in their places in the Senate Chamber with their daggers ready, sent one of their number to entreat him to come, as there was business of moment to be done. He rose to go, and, as he crossed the hall, his statue fell, and shivered on the stones. One of his servants tried in vain to warn him. As he still passed on, a stranger thrust a scroll into his hand, and begged him to read it on the spot. It was a list of the conspirators, with details of their plot. Cæsar supposed it to be a petition, and placed it carelessly among his other papers.

He went on, entered the House, and took his seat. "The conspirators," so Mr. Froude tells the story, "gathered round him. He was familiar, and easy of access. He knew them all. There was not one from whom he had not a

right to expect some sort of gratitude, and their movements suggested no suspicion. One had a story to tell him ; another some favour to ask. Tullius Cimber, whom he had just made governor of Bithynia, then came close to him, with some request which he was unwilling to grant. Cimber caught his gown, as if in entreaty, and dragged it from his shoulders. Cassius, who was standing behind, stabbed him in the throat. He started up with a cry and caught Cassius's arm. Another poniard entered his breast, giving a mortal wound." At the sight of Brutus, whom he had specially befriended, among his murderers, he exclaimed, " *Et tu, Brute !* " " Thou too, Brutus!" Then,

> When the noble Cæsar saw him stab,
> Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
> Quite vanquish'd him : then burst his mighty heart;
> And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
> Even at the base of Pompey's statue,
> Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.

Cæsar was great in everything he undertook ; as a soldier, an orator, a statesman, a lawgiver, a mathematician, an historian, an architect. He would have been a foremost man in any age. But the age in which he lived was one of the most critical in the whole world's history. Rome, but for him, would have fallen to pieces by the weight of its own greatness. How necessary the Roman Empire was to bring on the " fulness of time," none but a great scholar and a great theologian could tell you. It is agreed on every hand that outside the Bible there is no greater human

figure than Julius Cæsar. His very name is stamped everywhere on modern history. The word Emperor, which denotes the highest earthly dignity, comes from the word "Imperator," which he first assumed as a personal name. The titles Czar, and Kaiser, and Kaisar-i-Hind, borne by the Emperors of Russia and Germany, and the Queen as Empress of India, are all forms of the word "Cæsar." And our month of July was named after him. Before his time the year had long consisted of 355 days. The seasons no longer corresponded with their names. To make things right he made the year 46 B.C., known as the "year of confusion," to consist of 445 days—which must have been a terrible year for schoolboys and apprentices—and the years ever since to consist of 365. The month July was previously known as Quintilis, that is, the fifth month, counting from March, which for long began the year. The sixth month was Sextilis, the seventh September, and so on, till December, which means the tenth. Sextilis was changed to August, in honour of the Emperor Augustus, the son of Julius Cæsar's niece, in whose time Christ was born.

"In person Cæsar was tall and slight. His features were more refined than was usual in Roman faces; the forehead was wide and high, the nose large and thin, the eyes dark grey like an eagle's, the neck extremely thick and sinewy. His complexion was pale. His voice was high and shrill. He was a great bather; he rarely or never touched wine. He was a fine horseman;

in Gaul he rode a remarkable horse which would let no one but Cæsar mount him. From his boyhood it was observed of him that he was the truest of friends, that he avoided quarrels, and was easily appeased when offended. In manner he was quiet and gentlemanlike, with the natural courtesy of high breeding. Once, when he was dining somewhere, the other guests found the oil too rancid for them. Cæsar took it without remark, to spare his entertainer's feelings. When on a journey through a forest with his friend Oppius, he came one night to a hut where there was a single bed. Oppius being unwell, Cæsar gave it up to him, and slept on the ground."

It is interesting to know that he twice invaded Britain. He knew its size and shape, and learned also that another island, about half its size, lay west of it ; and it seems, too, that he had heard of the Isle of Man, and of other islands, far, far north, where the days in winter were very short.

I must tell you, also, that his mother's name was Aurelia. He was her only child, and all his days was passionately fond of her.

Take This, and be Thrifty

At Queen's College, Oxford, they have a quaint old custom on New Year's Eve. While the members of the college and their guests are still seated at the dinner table, the bursar or treasurer goes round, and gives to each one a threaded needle, with the words, "Take this, and be thrifty." The threads are either black, blue or red, and the bursar distributes the colours according as the recipient belongs to the faculties of Divinity, Medicine or Law.

We use needles, first of all, for joining things. When God makes things, He makes them grow, or He fuses them into one. Man's works are all in patches. God gives us the materials, and we have to bind them together. Now, see that you sew not only neatly but strongly. Do honest work that will stand a strain. I have heard Dr. Laws, the distinguished African missionary, say that his life was once saved from a lion because the canvas of his tent had been well sewn ; and it was sewn he afterwards found out, by a Greenock girl ! So sew, even if it be only sewing on a button, that whoever sees your work may praise it and bless you.

We use needles, also, because we do not see the end from the beginning. A man weaves cloth, not knowing who may use it, or what he may use it for. The cloth has to be rent asunder, and cut, and made up again. Let the beauty of your sewing make some amends for the rudeness of your rending.

Then, also, there are the rents that are made by

accident or by want of care. In all things we offend and make mistakes. God does all things well, and it is one of the proofs of the holiness of His Son, our Saviour, that, when He was on earth, His garment that had been woven without seam was so beautifully kept that even the rough soldiers had not the heart to tear it.

Once more, remember that sewing is for ornament as well as for use, or, as Thomas Fuller puts it, that "a needle is a woman's pencil, and embroidery is the masterpiece thereof." All great and good women have excelled in needlework.

If the men who go about lecturing on the X-rays and the new photography are to be believed, there must be a considerable percentage of our population who have got needles, or bits of needles, in their bodies. Remember, therefore, that needles are sharp things. Don't leave them lying about, and, if you lose one, light a candle if necessary, and sweep the house, and don't rest till you find it.

Lastly, you are to learn off by heart these simple rhymes about biting your threads, which a lady has written for you.

Mother tells me, when I sew,
Not to BITE my thread,
For it spoils my teeth, you know,
Wears the edges quite away,
Makes them very soon decay.
So I use instead
Scissors which she gave to me,
Tied with ribbon red,
Hanging at my side, you see.
Now, if you will take advice,
Save your teeth and keep them nice,
And always CUT your thread.

Rachel Weeping

A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuseth to be comforted for her children, because they were not.—Jer. XXXI. 15. (R.V.)

DR. BOMPAS, an English Church Missionary Bishop, who died two years ago, says, in one of his letters, that if a conversation were begun with an elderly North American Indian woman, she would generally turn the subject to the number of children she had lost, and these she would count on her fingers, and that it often took the whole ten to number her little ones that were dead. I have heard one of the agents of the National Bible Society of Scotland say the same thing about the women of Korea. When a baby dies there, its mother wraps it in straw and puts the little bundle in the topmost branches of a tree, that it may remain in her sight as long as possible. This agent himself lost a little one, and, when he and his wife carried it to the grave to bury it, and told the women who went with them that they believed their child was still theirs, and that its soul was with God, and that its body would rise again at the Last Day, the women were moved beyond words and went about telling others the strange good news that they had heard.

The killing of all children in Bethlehem, from two years old and under, by Herod at the time

our Saviour was born is one of the mysteries of Providence. But we know some of the purposes it served. It was a proclamation to the Jews that their King was coming, and that the princes and people of the earth would plot against Him, but in vain. The flight into Egypt was a gracious message to many a man and woman in that land. No mother that met Mary could ever forget her or her goodly Child, Emmanuel. Their visit to that great and ancient land would widen the minds of Joseph and Mary and fit them the better for the training of their Son, and doubtless, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the things that He saw and heard while there made their own proper mark on the mind of the Holy Child.

But there were two other purposes that God had in view in permitting the slaying of the little children that should specially be mentioned :

1. It bound Christ afresh, even in His childhood, to the work to which He had been set apart from all eternity, the work of man's redemption. In one sense, a very limited sense of course, but yet a real one, these children died for Him, and that bound Him to die for them, only His dying for them was exceeding abundantly above their dying for Him, even according to the infinite measure of His grace. But that is the measure with which He always metes back what is done for Him. But—

2. The slaying of the children bound Him to their mothers, and therefore to all mothers. Surely there is not one of those mothers in Bethlehem in heaven that, now that she knows all

things, regrets the special bond that binds her and her little one from amongst His fellow-citizens to the King of Glory ?

It is indeed a striking thing, and one that should comfort all fathers and mothers that have lost a child, that the first funerals in the New Testament, the Book that tells us of Him Who brought life and immortality to light, are the funerals of a little company of babes.

Mary Ann Hughes

Thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.—Acts x. 4.

Mary Ann Hughes and all the little brothers and sisters that followed her were carried to church in their mother's arms and on their father's back even from their infancy. Each got a ha'penny to put into the "plate." It wasn't much, but their father's wage was only nineteen shillings a week, and he had often "broken time." Each child was held over the plate and allowed to drop the money in, and, though many smiled at the performance, no one enjoyed it as much as the children themselves.

One Tuesday, when Mary Ann was seven years old, she had been sent with fourpence to buy something or other, "and a ha'penny back." The ha'penny was a new one and looked so pretty that she asked her mother to lay it past for Sabbath-day. Thenceforth every copper that came into the house was examined, and the brightest always laid aside. But one day a great thought came to Mary Ann. Why should she not *scour* one for herself and one for each of the others every week, and so give God of the very best? The elders and the deacons at the plate began soon to notice things—the plate is a rare post for a good wise man!—and the banker with whom the collection was lodged every Monday put questions, and after a time recommended Mary Ann's father for a place at three-and-twenty shillings a

week. And people in the church generally, especially old bachelors and thriftless women whose husbands earned big wages, talked often of the way that family seemed to prosper. And then poor Mary Ann took scarlet fever.

I needn't deny that it was a sad forenoon when she was taken away to the Infirmary. Her mother told her to be good, and say her prayers every morning and every night, and obey the nurses and doctors, and help them all she could. Mary Ann herself wondered if she would ever come back ; it was so sad to die so young.

But her case was a very mild one, and in a few days she was up and going about. She had won the love of the nurses from the first hour, and their affection for her grew daily. She was a rare little worker, helping to dress and undress the other children that were able to be out of bed, laying the table at meal-times, washing dishes, sweeping the floor. Then she taught some of the little ones how to pray, and some of the bigger ones how to ask a blessing at their meals, and all of them to brush their teeth and make them white ! She was schoolmistress, too, and made them say their lessons and do sums in arithmetic, and after a brief lesson there was a romp or game.

On Sabbaths when she heard the church bells ring—always a specially solemn thing to an invalid that has loved the place where God's honour dwelleth—she was at first inclined to cry. But she started a little church of her own, getting one of the boys from the boys' ward to be beadle, and another to be minister, and a third to be

precentor. It was the beadle, however, that magnified his office most. The minister did little more than walk in and out at his bidding. But Mary Ann knew the best stories to read, and could tell them even better than she read them.

One day a visitor gave the children a penny each, and on a sudden Mary Ann remembered her scouring days, and taking some ashes made her penny shine right royally. Then the others must clean theirs, and next they found one or two door handles and bits of brass that would take on polish. That was a new task and a new joy for them, till the day Mary Ann, amid the tears of her litttle comrades, was permitted to go home. But the others remembered the stories and the scouring, and when they went home in turn a good many mothers hardly knew their own children, so polite, and so cleanly, and so wise, and so obliging had they become. They brought their Infirmary methods and manners with them, so much so that many husbands were inclined to find fault with their wives for extravagance, buying new furniture and all kinds of ornaments. But it was only the old furniture and the old ornaments cleaned and polished and brightened up, lovingly treated by the new spirit their wives had got from their little ones, who owed it all to Mary Ann Hughes.

(The end of this story is not written yet, but it will be written, by the blessing of God, in the happy faces and the happy homes of many of these little girls when they become wives and mothers in the years to come.)

Socrates

Socrates was a famous Greek philosopher who lived at the same time as Malachi and Nehemiah. He was plain-looking, but a man's face may be ugly and yet very winning, and a girl's may be very beautiful and yet no one may care for it. It is the look we put into our faces that is everything. Socrates was considered the wisest man of his time, but that could only be, he said, because he knew his own ignorance and other people did not know theirs. He spent all his time teaching in public, going about the streets and the market-places and the shops, from morning to night, talking on any subject with anybody, young or old, rich or poor, who was willing to talk with him. His food and dress were of the plainest, for he was very poor. He had neither shirt nor shoes, even in winter, and yet he would take no reward from anyone. All that he could muster was £4, he told his judges. For, strange to say, he was accused before the people of bringing in a new religion and corrupting the youth, and sentenced to be put to death by poison. He lay thirty days in prison, and might have escaped if he had wished. When his last hour came he asked the executioner what he had to do. "Nothing," he said, "but after you have drunk it to walk about till your legs feel heavy, and then lie down." Then he handed him the cup, and

Socrates, taking it with great cheerfulness, drank it very readily and pleasantly. His friends, when they saw him drinking it, burst into tears, whereupon he cried out, " What are you doing, strange men ? Did I not send the women away that there might be no noise ? Be quiet, therefore, and act bravely." A little after he lay down and died, seventy years of age.

His wife, Xantippe, who might have been famous as his helpmeet, is remembered only for her bad temper and her loud tongue.

The Little Gossiping Snipe

AMONG the reeds by the margin of a loch in one of the western isles two snipes built their nest. It took little trouble to do that, for the building consisted only of choosing a hollow spot in the ground and gathering a few withered leaves and stalks. There the mother snipe laid four eggs of olive white, spotted with brown; and when the days were longest, and the summer sun was pouring its warm rays down on moor and loch, the little snipes made their appearance. Oh they were dear little beauties! They were dressed in lovely dark maroon with spots of black and white and buff, and their dresses fitted to perfection! They were soon able to run about quite freely, and in a few weeks more they would have passed quite readily for their mother's younger sisters.

The Snipe family were very happy. They had most things to make them so, for there was plenty to eat in the mossy ground round the loch, the scenery was of the grandest, and there was no want of society. There was quite a colony of snipes in the neighbourhood, and Mrs. Eider-Duck was rearing a numerous family just round the corner. Indeed, one could hardly go a few yards among the reeds beside the loch without stumbling on some wild bird's nest. For the loch was far from the haunts of men, and the birds were seldom disturbed; only when a shepherd counting his sheep on the moor passed that way, or

when, in the winter time, a shooting party, with their guns and dogs, came to have what they were pleased to call a " day's sport."

The mother snipe took great pains in training her children. She taught them how to pierce the soft soil of the marshy places with their long sensitive bills so as to find the food most suitable for them.

Now, it does seem strange that a snipe should be able to tell what is at the end of its bill when that bill is away down in the dark earth. How can it tell when it doesn't see? Yet frail man does things as wonderful. What layer of earth is darker or more confused in its contents than the pocket of a boy with its marbles, top, pencil, string, unfinished apple, and what not? Yet shall he not with the point of one finger only unerringly distinguish every one? Could even Egyptian darkness make him mistake his pencil for his apple, though the one perchance be as soft and nutritious as the other?

The snipes' mother also taught them how to fly, saying—" Now when you are alarmed you must squat down so on the ground at once, and if you take to flight you must dart about from side to side so as to make it difficult for anyone to shoot you. All snipes are able to do that, and when my cousins come from Norway to spend the winter with us, for it is too cold there, I hope they will find you properly behaved. Try to be kind and helpful to one another and never do anything mean." The three eldest grew up as obedient and affectionate as a mother's heart could wish.

The youngest daughter, I am sorry to say, came to a sad end, the result of a wicked habit. As soon as she could run about alone she became very fond of visiting all the neighbours and hearing all that was going on. She went from one to another retailing all she had heard, often adding a little bit just to make it more striking. She was a fair mimic, so she entertained the woodcocks with accounts of the sandpipers' peculiarities, and amused the sandpipers with stories about the woodcocks, and made the young people of both families shriek with laughing at her imitation of Mrs. Eider-Duck's elegant gait, until she came to think she was a very clever little snipe indeed.

But I am sorry to say she did worse. So eager did she become to hear of other birds' affairs that she sometimes hid herself in order to hear what was not intended for her ears. Her mother caught her at it only once, but it nearly broke her heart. I thought the daughter never could have forgotten what her mother and she said to one another that day. For it was the most solemn day there had ever been in their family history. The other young ones did not know what their sister had done, but the distress of their mother was so evident that they neither ate nor drank nor played, but lay shivering together all day.

But their sister soon forgot her promise, and another day came, more solemn still. She had been hiding behind a clump of reeds, listening to an interesting disagreement between her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Sandpiper. Mrs. Sandpiper, who never would be punctual, had kept her husband

waiting a whole half-hour that day, and, dearly though he loved her, the annoyance it had caused him, and the heavy loss it had occasioned several other birds whose time had depended on his—to say nothing of the shame of it all—so grieved him that he spoke for once most bitterly. And Mrs. Sandpiper, instead of being grieved, as a true wife should have been at having made her husband say things he never could think of afterwards without pain, spoke back tauntingly and sneeringly. And our friend, the listening snipe, was just wondering how many calls she could make that afternoon, and where she would begin, when her mother's words came into her mind—" Oh, my dear, dear child, never do anything mean." But she pushed them from her, and determined to go first to the Eider-Ducks'. So she was ripe for judgment, and it came. A passing hawk had noticed her, and was now poised in the air above her, but so intent on her thoughts had she become that she did not notice him. It was but the work of a moment, and all her wit and cleverness and beauty perished. With one swoop he seized and carried her off, and a faint scream of terror was the last that was heard of her who was spoken of ever afterwards as " the little gossiping snipe."

Play With All Your Might

Among the Benjamites there were seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair-breadth, and not miss.—Judges xx. 16.

When the Queen of Sheba tried to puzzle King Solomon, as the story goes, by bringing to him a hundred children all dressed as girls, and asking him to pick out all the boys, Solomon did it by tossing apples and oranges to them. The boys caught them in their hands, and the girls in their pinafores. That test would not tell in this country, happily, where for centuries girls have enjoyed a liberty, and been treated with a wisdom and affection, that are unknown in Eastern and heathen lands.

How many of these Jerusalem boys, I wonder, could catch "and not miss"? They are complaining in England just now of the number of "dropped catches" at cricket. Last year, says a writer in *The Monthly*, 121,013 runs were scored in first-class county matches; there would have been 18,000 fewer had the fielders held all the balls that came to hand. I like to see boys and girls throwing a ball one to another and practising catches. It is good fun. Two can play at it as well as twenty, and, if a boy can get no one else to play with, he can play with himself at it. And the boy or girl who plays at it is not only having fun, such as God is well pleased that he should

have, but he is learning at the same time, learning to use his hands and eyes and legs, and learning to use them together ; he learns also to measure distance and time and force ; and, if he is playing with others, he has the chance of learning unselfishness and courtesy and self-control and knowledge of character, and of practising such harmless wiles as at once amuse and delight himself and astonish and smarten his companions. That is why the game of " leads " at skipping-ropes—in which the girl who is skipping jumps out whenever she chooses, and does it as unexpectedly as she can so that the one who follows her is taken unawares—seems to me one of the prettiest and most interesting and amusing and educative of all games. As iron sharpeneth iron, so God wishes boys and girls to sharpen one another. Many years ago, I remember delving in a garden where there were hens and ducks. The first day or two the hens got all the worms ; while a duck was coming, a hen stepped in before her. But the consorting and competing with a nimbler and more quick-witted race stirred up the gifts that were in the ducks. On the third day they held their own in the race for spoil, and by the fourth day they had got the mastery. And that not merely by their greater weight and boldness—for they came so close to my spade that every time I lifted it I lifted a duck with it—but their very eyesight had grown keener and quicker. I have no doubt the hens were sharper too, but their aforetime sluggish mates had made an even greater advance.

So, boys and girls, play away ! The happier you are, and the happier you make one another, the better pleased will God be. For it is He That made you, and gave you limbs and faculties ; it is His Spirit That not only teaches you all your games but reminds you also, as He does the storks and cranes and swallows, of their appointed times of coming.

The Eight-Day Clock

The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails well fastened are the words of the masters of assemblies.—Eccles. XII. 11. (R.V.)

THE eight-day clock is now 120 years old, and all that time it has gone on night and day, day and night, week in, week out, through fair weather and through foul, through spring, and summer, and autumn, and winter—and the winters long ago were very dark and dreary—ticking once every moment, ticking 86,400 times every day (how many is that in a year?), ticking altogether, though the number changes even while I write the figures down, more than three thousand seven hundred and eighty-six million times! Ticking away at the same jog-trot pace, without the refreshment even of a spurt at the close of the day, or a little gallop when the sun shines out after rain. Now and again when it was young, its owner would say languidly, "Yes, it keeps pretty fair time," or "good time," or "splendid time," according to his mood. But often months would pass, as Dr. Johnson said about the writing of his Dictionary in his letter to Lord Chesterfield, "without one word of encouragement or one smile of favour." Every dozen years it was cleaned, and four times in its history it was stopped for a day or

two while new catgut cords for the weights were being got. But it found standing still its hardest work.

There was one other trial it had to bear. How soon it began to have it I cannot tell, but I know it had it from 1830 till 1900.

The key for winding it up was left lying loose and very insecurely on a ledge that ran round the front and sides of the top of the clock, and every time anyone came against the clock, or dusted it, or lifted the key to use it, the key fell down with a clatter, and people would say—"Botheration take it!" or whatever other idle sinful phrase they affected, and every time they said it the clock shivered, for to it to speak lightly of anything connected with time, "which is the stuff eternity is made of," seemed very wrong.

For forty years that trial went on, and then a new owner drove a nail into the back of the case in the inside, and when he was done with his winding would leave the key resting on it. But before he could get the key to begin the winding, he had to put his hand in through the cords, and then the weights would whirl, and ten times out of eleven the key fell down into the bottom of the case, and he would say as he knelt to feel in its dark recesses—"There's that key down again! It's a regular nuisance!"

And that trial continued till the close of last century, when one day a joiner, a good and careful workman, hearing the master of the house say, "Hang that key!" made answer, "That's the very thing to do, sir!" and thereupon fixed a

little brass hook inside the case and tied a piece of string to the key. Nine years and a half have passed since then, and the key has never once fallen down, nor its master once spoken unadvisedly.

But the old clock still gives a shiver once a week when winding-time comes round, for a sorrow that has lasted for a lifetime is not easy to be forgotten. And, oh, how much sin would have been prevented if someone had only thought, a hundred years ago, of that hook and bit of string!

Caiaphas

That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.—John XVIII. 15.

THE worse a man is the more God does for him, for He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Caiaphas was a bad man, and had no right to be the high priest of Israel. But, somehow or other, he had got into that position, and, though God might well have refused to acknowledge him or take any notice of him, and might simply have treated him as a usurper, and an impudent usurper, God strove to make him fit for the place he had no right to fill. How many things God did to make him good, we shall not know to the Day of Judgment when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. But there were three things that we know of that were specially done for him.

1. The Holy Ghost opened his eyes and showed him the whole mystery of redemption. Since Caiaphas was high priest "that same year"—the greatest year there ever had been—it should have been his high privilege and honour to tell the people that Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world. Therefore it was that the Holy Ghost taught him that it was for the nation's good and the whole world's good that "One man should die for the people."

And, though Caiaphas put a different meaning into the words and twisted them about, we can see from the temper with which he spoke—John xi. 49—that he knew quite well what the Spirit that was in him did signify. God sent forth His light and His truth and he deliberately shut his eyes to them.

2. The second thing God had done for this bad man was to make him acquainted with the apostle John. John was the best man in the world at that time, our Lord's greatest friend, the man whose head Christ had made to lean on His Own breast. No man could come so close to Him without being like Him. Any man looking at John was bound to say, "This is not a common man, he has been in high company, everything about him shows that 'he dwells on high,' and that he has been in the palace of the Great King." The man to whom our dying Lord gave His Own mother in charge must have been the man who was likest Himself. And Caiaphas knew that man, and no doubt had had many a solemn talk with him, for John could tell him things that only two other men, Peter and James, knew besides himself. Jesus might therefore well say to Caiaphas, "Why askest thou Me about My doctrine? You know some of My friends, you know them intimately, ask them."

How Caiaphas had come to know John we can't tell. All of us in our time will become acquainted with people who apparently now belong to quite another sphere of life. People will say to us, "But how did *you* get to know that man?"

And we shall have to say, "Well, it came about in a very curious way that would take a long time to explain." God keeps our goings out and our comings in, and directs all our steps, and if we are worthy to be witnesses for Him to any man in the world, if we are the people who are most fit to do that man good, God will somehow bring him and us together. The Bible, from the days of Moses and Pharaoh to the days of Paul and Nero, is full of such meetings of men whose lots originally lay far apart. And it is this consideration that gives such solemnity to what we call chance meetings and casual introductions. "Who knoweth," nay, rather, who can doubt, "whether thou art come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?"

3. And of course the third and greatest thing that God did for Caiaphas was to bring him face to face with Christ Himself. Every man in the world, some day or other, hears God saying, "This is My beloved Son, hear Him"; or, as one of the cleverest men of modern times has put it—a man who himself fell as low as any man can fall—"Once in his life at least each man walks with Christ to Emmaus."

The Challenge Cup

And the kine went along the highway, lowing as they went.—I. Sam. VI. 12.

Tom Halliard, the young tenant of Woodbarns Farm, was in high spirits on the morning of the Cattle Show Day, the 20th of May. A week of rain had been followed by a week of great heat, but on this day the heat was tempered by a gentle breeze. He had won the Twenty-guinea Challenge Cup presented by Admiral Sir Richard Ramshorn, K.C.B., for the best cow in milk, the two previous years. If he won it to-day, it would become his own property, or rather, it would become *hers*. Not the cow's! but his sweetheart's, for he was to be married on the 31st. Everyone knew he was sure to win, for the cow he had entered for the competition had all the points in perfection that such a cow should have, and that morning she was looking her very best. I almost think she knew she was the destined winner of a Cup, for she was intelligent above many of her equals, and she could see that her master was both proud and fond of her.

Tom's sweetheart, who was the eldest daughter of a neighbouring farmer, had come with her mother to spend the day at the farm, for there were two rooms to be papered and some other things to be attended to. She went with him to the turn

of the road, 400 yards away, and, playfully telling the cow that she carried Cæsar and his fortunes, warned Tom not to come home without the Cup ; and then, rebuking herself, added, " or something better than the Cup." Tom wasn't quite sure what she meant, and ruminated over that saying a good deal as he went slowly on his way. Nor do I think she knew herself exactly what she meant, only she had felt ashamed at seeming to speak as if the Cup were everything.

Along with Tom there went, I should have told you, his byreman Alec. When they were round the bend, and had come to Alec's cottage, they found Alec's wife and her five children waiting to wish them good-speed. " And see and behave yourself," she said to her goodman. It is a common farewell salutation that, one that some of us have heard at railway stations, and elsewhere, a hundred times, and generally spoken with a laugh, but it is a phrase with a tremendous depth of meaning in it, how tremendous only God and some hearts that have been broken know.

The beginning of this story goes a long way back, and is indeed the foundation on which the whole story rests.

Tom Halliard was one of whom we may say that he prayed always, but on Cattle Show Day he came unusually close to God.

It was eight years now since his father had died, and fifteen since his mother had entered into her rest. The Show Day had been the terror of her life for many a weary year. It meant, on her husband's part, the beginning, as a rule, of a long

drinking bout. And the last one she lived to see was the saddest and most shameful. Almost her last words to her son were, " You'll be as kind to your father as you can, and maybe our prayers will be answered yet."

But her husband was not at her funeral.

Whether God ever answered her prayers or not I cannot say, but this I know that Tom had many a sad heart. There were parts of the road to the farm that had such awful memories for him that he never passed them without standing still a moment to pray to God. There were three or four common stones on the roadside, too, that were Bethels, places where he had made vows.

The loving concern he had felt for his father he transferred to all the workers on his farm, and they knew it.

On the day of our story, as he went on his way, a cloud somehow seemed to fall upon his spirits. He felt a strange uneasiness, a foreboding of impending evil, a foreboding that grew and grew, till at last he could stand it no longer. He had come at that instant to a part of the road where his father had once used cruel words to him, and the scene rose up before his memory with fearful vividness.

" Alec," he said to his man at last, " I don't know why it is, but I am somehow greatly put about, and the two of us will just pray a moment together."

So the two prayed, and went on their way again.

The publican who leased the refreshment tent was himself a teetotaller—and that is far and away

the worst kind of publican—but he hated all teetotallers bitterly, and specially the young farmer of Woodbarns, through whose long-continued efforts the right to run a Temperance Tent had at last been won from the Cattle Show directors. It was one of the publican's great ambitions to make some of Mr. Halliard's workers the worse of drink. "I'll pay him off for the money he has lost me these two years, I don't care what it costs me."

The judges had gone over the cows' section once, and were now going over it the second time, not in any doubt as to the first prize ; it was the awarding of the second that was their difficulty. Suddenly Mr. Halliard heard a great burst of laughter from the publican's tent. Looking round he saw his man Alec in the centre of a little group, and, oh, how his heart grew cold and heavy within him !

There was but one thing to do. And he did it.

He went forward to the tent, and into the group, paid the 6d. Alec had spent, and then took him by the arm.

"We are going home at once, Alec. Fetch Buttercup."

"But we'll lose the Cup, sir."

"The Cup's nothing."

"But they'll object."

"It doesn't matter whether they object or not."

There was a great scene amongst the onlookers when Alec loosed Buttercup, and some of them

tried to prevent him. And there was another scene when the judges heard what had been done, and still another when they reported it to a hastily summoned meeting of directors. But it would take half an hour to tell it all.

They were two miles on their way before Mr. Halliard spoke. "I don't know, Alec," he said at last, "that I acted quite wisely. But God will forgive me, and I hope you will, too, if I did wrong. But I was striving for your soul. Oh, man, I have seen so many young fellows ruined at these shows! A man that is once drunk is never the same man all his days."

When they came to the third milestone where the spring is, Mr. Halliard gave Alec some sandwiches and fruit that he had bought at the Temperance Tent; and then they sat and talked for two hours as men rarely do to one another. And they set up on the hillside another Bethel that afternoon, a stone apiece, for to both of them, and specially to Alec, that place became the very gate of Heaven.

It is hardly necessary to say that Alec's wife, at first, was greatly put about, but, as her husband told the story of all that had happened on the road, her heaviness was turned to a joy that never passed away.

I should have told you that poor Buttercup seemed to feel as keenly as any the change in the fortunes of that day. She had had hosts of visitors from the moment she was placed in her pen, and every visitor had left her an admirer, and she knew it. And then it all ended in a

moment, and she had to take the road! No wonder she lowed the whole way home.

It was her lowing that brought Tom's sweetheart to the door.

"Have you not brought the Cup?" she asked, for she saw by his face that something strange had happened.

"No," he said, "but I've brought back something better. I've brought Alec home sober." And then he told her all that he had done, and why; because, of course, she had a right to know, and how he and Alec on the hillside had made a covenant with God.

"And you did well, Tom," she said, "in letting the Cup go." Then, after a little, she added, "And, do you know, I think Buttercup is just like the kine that went lowing along the road to Beth-shemesh; she was carrying the Ark of God, though she didn't know it. And yet maybe she did! Who knows?"

When the old admiral Sir Richard heard what Mr. Halliard had done, he was perfectly furious, for, you see, he took it into his head that the young farmer didn't wish to put him to the expense of offering a new Cup, and no sailor can bear to be thought capable of being mean. And he wouldn't rest, and couldn't, till he had found out all that was at the bottom of Tom Halliard's action, and then he said that for a landlubber it was well meant; though a sailor, he thought, could have done it better!

On Tom's wedding-day the assembled guests and the bride and bridegroom saw to their

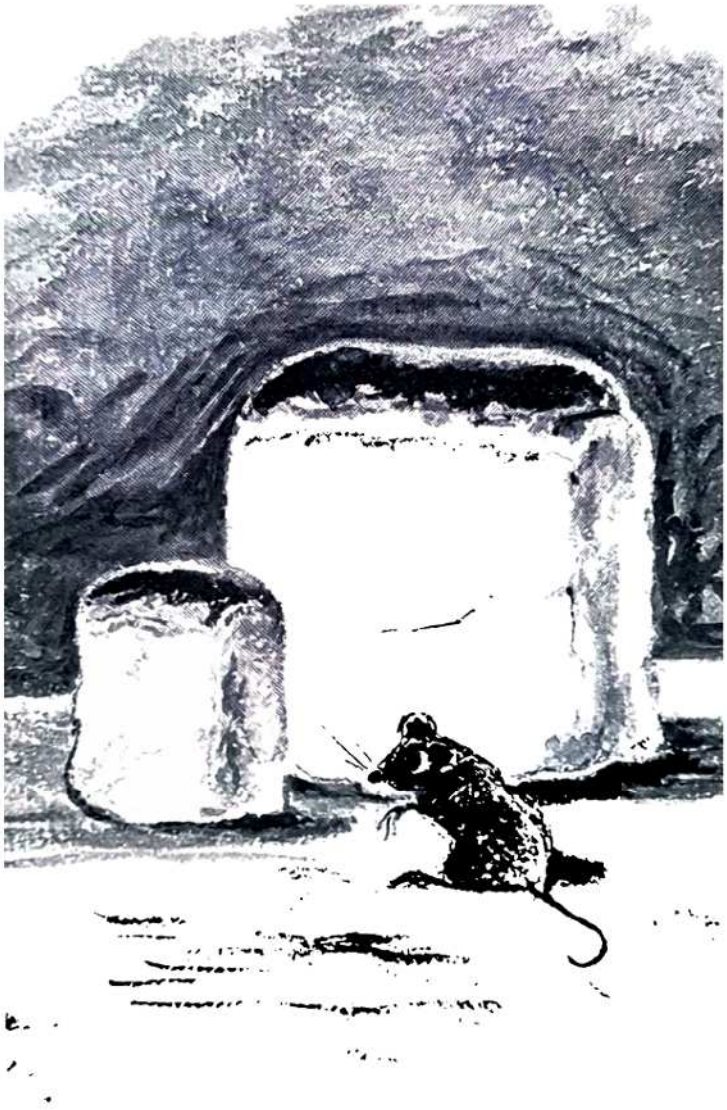
amazement the Admiral's wagonette drive up to the door.

" My wife and I both wished to come, and our three girls wouldn't stay away. But don't be afraid, we shall only wait for a little, and then leave you to your friends. And we'll take the minister away with us, and that will make you still happier ! Don't deny it ! And Lady Ramshorn has brought you a little gift, and we both hope you'll get many a cup out of it for the one you lost by breaking the rules at the Cattle Show; only they will be cups that cheer but not inebriate ! You see, old sailor though I am, I haven't forgotten all my book-learning yet ! "

A Punishment Loaf

It was my lot a few weeks ago to give a lecture to over 500 men in one of the largest prisons in Scotland. They were met in their chapel, sitting beside one another on forms, with warders on raised seats here and there. The Prison Commissioners think that lectures on all kinds of subjects do the men good in many ways. There is no doubt the men themselves like them. It is a change to them. They see one another. They are allowed to laugh and cheer. And if a warder were to find fault and say, "Stop that laughing, No. 99, there's nothing to laugh at!" I suppose the man might appeal to the visitor on the ground that there were differences of taste in humour, and that the passage at which he had laughed was a singularly fine, if somewhat subtle, piece—a judgment in which we may be sure the lecturer himself would, though blushingly, concur.

When the lecture was over—and it had to be over at an appointed moment—and the men were being led back to their cells, I was taken to the vast kitchen where they bake the bread and cook the food, and there I saw the loaves that were to supply some three or four prisons the next day. These loaves were of different sizes; amongst them being a number of little ones, such perfect beauties that I coveted and asked for one, on the spot, without thinking. I saw the next moment,



"SURELY THIS IS A MOST EXTRAORDINARILY LITTLE LOAF"

however, that I had made a mistake. It was just as if in a Government Small Arms factory I had asked for a cartridge, or in a bank had asked for one of those pretty little sixpences that were lying in abundance on the teller's desk. But, whether it was that one too many had been baked; or that it was thought, if a question were put in Parliament, "If it was the case that a Protestant minister had been supplied with bread for nothing out of prison stores, and if so, why?"—the Prison Commissioners might defend themselves by saying, 1, That it was the case, but, 2, that, as the gentleman in question had been lecturing, it was felt that, in the circumstances, his request for a ha'penny loaf as a memento of his visit, however improper and reprehensible, could scarcely be refused; or whether it was that the lecture was so poor that the Governor, unable to say as King Ahab did concerning Micaiah—much as he would have wished it—"Put this fellow in the prison"—did the nearest thing to it he could by saying, "Feed him with bread of affliction": whichever of these reasons it was, I got the beauty loaf after all! But I was greatly amazed, the moment after, when I was told it was what was called a "Punishment Loaf."

A prisoner gets porridge and buttermilk for breakfast and supper; for dinner he gets 12 oz. of bread, and two pints of broth or pea-soup, with so much beef boiled into it, so long as he behaves well. But if he breaks any of the prison rules he may be put, for one day at a time, on reduced rations, in which case he gets 4 oz. of

bread for breakfast, 8 for dinner, and 4 for supper, and water as much as he likes to drink. It was a 4 oz. punishment ration that I had thought, like Eve with the forbidden fruit, so pleasant to the eyes, and a loaf to be desired to make one wise. Let me add, however, that, if the good Governor seemed to grudge me that little morsel, there was no stint in what his lady and he had prepared for me at their own table !

Is it not a touching thing that a prisoner by his sin brings this upon himself, that he is shut off from his fellow-men for months or years, and is denied those opportunities of doing good to others that come to us, with every person we meet, hundreds of times each day ? And he must eat his morsel alone ; he is denied the right to give anything away—that is, he is denied all right to a share in one of the greatest of God's attributes.

It is an interesting fact that a prisoner's daily ration to-day corresponds in quantity almost exactly to the provisions to which, for a sign to Israel, God limited the prophet Ezekiel, chapter iv : " And thy meat which thou shalt eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day ; from time to time shalt thou eat it. Thou shalt drink also water by measure, the sixth part of an hin ; from time to time shalt thou drink." Only it was not two pints of broth that Ezekiel got, but simply the water broth is made from.

A " Punishment Loaf " ! What a strange " union and conjunction " of words ! But it is man, and not God, that joins these two together. God's loaves are all Promise Loaves. Could there

be a sweeter word than that which He speaks, in Isaiah xxxiii, to the man that shutteth his eyes from seeing evil? "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure." Why sure? Because our bread and water come to us through Christ, and for His sake. Our daily bread is part of the Covenant of Grace. He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? And the other side of that statement is equally true. With every bite of bread, with every drop of water, with everything God gives us, God gives us also the offer of His Unspeakable Gift, His Well-beloved Son. That is why we "say grace," or "give thanks," at every meal. We thank God in the memorable words of a poor old woman who was sitting down to a crust and a cup of water—"for all this and Christ besides."

Never forget that our Lord broke bread and ate and supped with His disciples *after* His resurrection, and in eating bread, for the custom of the East is here the custom of Heaven, He made with us, if we will, a covenant of friendship never to be broken.

. . . . . .

O God, keep all of us who read these words from ever suffering as murderers, or thieves, or evil-doers. Keeping Thy precepts may we walk at liberty, having our feet set in a large place, eating our own bread, serving our generation, and not chargeable to any man. Keep us from

bringing shame on our friends and on our land ; keep us from bringing reproach on Christ.

Thou Who dost set at liberty them that are bruised, loose all prisoners from their bonds, from stubbornness, pride, despair. Cause them to feel that they are Prisoners of Hope.

And give of Thy Holy Spirit to all who are keepers of our prisons, whether in high or low degree, that they may be tender, brave, and wise, and just. For Thy dear Son's sake. Amen.

Secrets

Little Nelly Nicholson is peeping through the key-hole, and she is neither meaning nor doing any wrong. She does it in the very innocence and simplicity of her heart. She hides nothing that she knows or does herself. Indeed, it has never yet occurred to her that people should do anything and not wish to have it known. Poor little lassie! She will find out, by and by, that there are deeds both good and bad that only God and the holy angels have a right to see.

It is not only what she sees, it is the new light in which she sees them, that interests her. The key-hole gives them a new setting; it limits the field of vision and makes her see one or two things with all her might; it acts also like the frame of a picture, rounding off, as well as defining, what she looks at.

One winter in St. Petersburg, a long time ago, they made, as they still do in many places, a great palace of ice. A clever Russian set up a little hut, just big enough to hold one person at a time, and put up a notice at the door—"The Ice Palace to be seen inside as large as life. Admission, one kopeck." When the simple passers-by turned in, they found a little hole in the back of the hut, and, when they looked through it, they saw the palace truly, and as large as life, and no wonder for it was the very palace itself

they were looking at! They could have had a view of it for nothing without going into the hut at all. But it was worth paying a ha'penny, not only for the laugh which they would have at themselves four-and-twenty hours after when the joke began to dawn on them, but for the view as well. They would get through that little hole an impression of the size and proportions and beauty of the palace that they never had before.

It is a great thing in life to get a change of point of view. It is fine to see things with the fresh eye of a child. One of the great differences between a wise man and a fool is, that the fool won't alter his point of view, and can't be made to see that there are at the very least two—not to say two million million—ways of looking at almost everything.

But little Nelly must learn not to look through key-holes any more. Key-holes are for keys, and not for chubby-cheeked and blue-eyed little girls. There are no shut doors in Heaven, because there are no secrets there, but God's will is not yet done on earth as it is in Heaven, and so, as long as we are here, we have secrets and doors and locks and keys.

People who are always trying to find out other people's affairs are themselves found out sooner or later. In Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* there is a character named Pecksniff. And one day Mr. Pecksniff, anxious to find out what was going on in a certain room, put his head down to a key-hole at the end of a dark passage, and the next

moment he cried out in anguish, "Oh!" For another gentleman, a Mr. Montague Tigg, was already there before him, with the same purpose in view, and the two heads had been very violently knocked together! I know another story, a true one, that makes one shudder every time one thinks of it. There is a little town I know, in which there is a woman who lost an eye that way many years ago. She was peeping through a key-hole in her neighbour's door, and the neighbour, suspecting it, with a folly that was greater than the crime she sought to punish, thrust a fork through!

As you get older you will sometimes both see and hear things that were never meant for you to know. I am not speaking of crimes and other things of which God makes us witnesses. It is our duty to reveal these, no matter what it may cost us. But I am speaking of things which we have no business either to know or tell. Remember it is a great honour to a girl or a woman when it is said of her, "You can trust her with a secret." And no woman is so completely and so justly distrusted and detested, even by those who listen greedily to her, as the woman who goes about telling things which she ought not. Leviticus xix. 16: "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD."

When you grow up and go into situations, as teachers, or shop-girls, or book-keepers, or, as I hope many of the best and wisest among you

will do, as household servants, never look at anything that you were not meant to see; never enter a closed room without permission; never even look in at a half-opened door or press or drawer; and never read another person's letters.

The Emperor Nero

THIS is the man who put the Apostle Paul to death.

His early training, owing to his father's death and his mother Agrippina's banishment, was left to two slaves, a dancer and a barber. But Agrippina was soon recalled, and the charge passed into her own hands. She set herself at once to win the throne for him. The struggle lasted thirteen years. She got the Empress put to death, and then married the Emperor Claudius, her own uncle. Six years afterwards she poisoned him, and Nero, her son, became Emperor, 12th October, 54. Claudius had left a son, a noble boy, Britannicus. Him Nero poisoned at a banquet to which he had invited him. He died at the table in presence of the guests, who were commanded to resume the feast the moment the poor lad's body was removed. Soon after, Agrippina's own turn came. First he enticed her, under guise of love, on board a ship so built that at a given signal it fell to pieces. To his consternation his mother swam ashore, and there was nothing left for him to do but to send his guards to murder her. With her latest breath she called him "Monster." To this crime he was chiefly urged by his love for a woman named Poppæa, whom he had stolen from her husband. Her he made Empress after he had murdered,

in her twentieth year, his wife Octavia, the sister of Britannicus. The year after he kicked Poppæa to death. Is it any wonder that the Roman historian, Tacitus, feels himself compelled to apologise for the tediousness of such a record of bloodshed and crime?

Yet the one-half has not been told. In the year 64 the great fire broke out which destroyed ten of the fourteen "regions" into which Rome was divided. Rightly or wrongly, Nero was accused of having caused it. He certainly had looked on with undisguised delight. To appease the populace, who demanded some victim, he laid the blame, as the historian says, "on the common people called Christians." He put vast numbers of them to death, adding mockery to cruelty, wrapping them in wild beasts' skins and setting dogs at them, or crucifying them, or setting them on fire and using them as torches by night.

Meantime the city was rising from its ruins, Nero building for himself a palace, called from its splendour the Golden House. It had three covered galleries, each a mile long. In front of its chief entrance stood a marble Colossus, or huge statue, of the Emperor, 120 feet high. From it the neighbouring theatre was called the Colosseum. In 66 he went to Greece, for he was proud of his singing and fiddling and driving, to contend at the great games for prizes. Woe to the man who tried to beat the Emperor! One poor singer who drowned his voice was put to death! It is no wonder, therefore, that in every contest, even in the chariot race in which he actually rolled

over, chariot, horses, and all, in mid career, Nero got the crown !

His course was now all but finished. Yet, ere the close, God, Who had striven with him from the beginning, sent one last messenger, His best and greatest, the chief of the Apostles, to offer him forgiveness through the Blood of Christ. But to his sins he added yet this above all, he put Paul to death.

The end soon came. His people could bear him no longer, his legions revolted, his prayers and tears were met with ridicule. In vain he asked to be allowed to sail to Alexandria that he might earn his bread by singing in the streets ! He fled from Rome to a freedman's house four miles off and, crawling on hands and feet into a little room through a hole made in a back wall, lay waiting for his doom. It was the 9th of June, the anniversary of his wife Octavia's death. Presently, hearing the trampling of his pursuers' horses, he drew out two daggers, and died by his own hand, a slave giving him the final blow. And so perished miserably, in the thirty-first year of his age, the last of the race of the Cæsars.

Pray For The King

Now the rest of his acts, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the Lord, behold, they are written among the acts of the kings of Israel.—II. Chron. XXXIII. 18 (R.V.)

IT is a striking fact that *king* is one of the commonest words in the Bible. It occurs, according to Dr. Robert Young's *Analytical Concordance*, nearly twenty-five hundred times. The only noun that occurs oftener, that I know of, is the word *man*, which is to be met with only two or three hundred times more. The fact shows, I think, how great a part kings play in history, and how true it is that "Like king, like people," and "Like people, like king."

In the Bible there are mentioned about two hundred individual kings, great and small, few of them good, and almost all unhappy. Most of them came to violent ends. Of no less than seventy—dismissed in one sentence—all that we know is, that one of the cruellest of the kings of the Canaanites cut off their thumbs and great toes and made them gather their meat under his table.

Kings and queens, like ourselves, have a private history that is known in part to a very few, and known wholly only to God. And it is He who shall be their Judge.

Pray For The King

As much as any men they need our prayers, for though they have special mercies they have special trials. They are never alone, yet they have none whom they can call companions. They are envied, hated, slandered, and they know it. And, worse still, they are flattered and know it not. Most of us have had bad ancestors, but their evil examples, like their names, have passed into oblivion. But the sins and crimes of the ancestors of those whom men call royalties are writ large on the page of history, and the kings are few that can get any help from the memory of those that have preceded them.

" I exhort, therefore," says Paul to Timothy, " that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men ; for kings and all that are in high place."

Yes, we must pray for the King, and for all kings and rulers, as well as for all men, more than we have done in the past, and much more earnestly. From henceforth let our prayers find a place " in the rest of their acts," amongst their secret records, unknown to those for whom we pray, known but in part to others, but written before God, and written to be read and answered and remembered—remembered still after they are answered !

The Right of Access

And, behold, two blind men, sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace.—Matt. xx. 30.

When Lord Roberts was presented with the Freedom of the City of Glasgow, a few years ago, I was witness of an interesting and touching sight. The public ceremony in the City Hall was followed by a luncheon in the Municipal Buildings. In the open carriage in which Lord Roberts sat there were his aide-de-camp, Captain Freemantle, I think; General Chapman, Commanding the Forces in Scotland; and also, of course, the Lord Provost, all in full uniform. But alongside the carriage, and holding on to the door, there ran a tatterdemalion, whose broken-down appearance and excited manner of speech took away all dignity from the scene, and made it, indeed, nothing less than ridiculous. The spectators who lined the streets were visibly annoyed. I remember that one man, standing in a group beside me, said, "Why hasn't the coachman the sense to lash the fellow off?" The coachman and footman beside him did turn round and look at the man more than once, but that was all they did, though whether in obedience to orders or not I do not know. But there the man ran, and continued to run, holding on and speaking evidently

with great emotion. When the carriage drew up at the main entrance in George Square, the man kept on speaking, and, to the amazement of everybody, Lord Roberts kept on listening. The man was apparently an old soldier with a grievance. After listening for some time, Lord Roberts left the carriage, but presently his aide-de-camp came forward, led the man aside, took out his note-book, and wrote down some words to his dictation. What happened after that I do not know, but I am sure the gracious kindly courtesy that made Lord Roberts listen to the man would keep him from forgetting him : his case, whatever it was, would be enquired into.

That has ever been the way with men of kingly nature. " The essential point of manners," says a distinguished diplomatist, Sir Robert Morier, in a paper on an Ambassador's Ideals, " is not to betray when you are bored. Therefore listen to all complaints ; answer all letters ; do not cut interviews short because the visitor happens to be poor or humble. Remember your time is paid for by the State."

There is a still higher ideal, however, than not to *look* bored, and that is not to *be* bored. And that ideal we see fulfilled in Christ.

> For He despised not nor abhorred
> Th' afflicted's misery,
> Nor from him hid His face, but heard
> When he to Him did cry.

It is a royal thing to listen to a man in trouble. No throne can stand that withholds the right of

access, or refuses to its subjects the right to petition. "I have no time to hear you," said Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, to a poor woman who asked for audience. "Then," said she, "cease to be king!"

Rorison's Albatross

The passengers on board the S.S. *Erromanga*, London to Sydney, were just finishing breakfast, when Mr. Marks appeared at the door of the saloon. "You're late this morning," said the Captain.

"Yes, but I was looking at an albatross."

At the word albatross there was a rush from the tables. The fact was, the passengers, I am sorry to say, had been betting. About twenty of them had each put a sovereign in a bag, and the person who first saw an albatross was to get the £20. That was the way they spent their time and money. One day it was—who should make the best guess as to the number of miles the ship had sailed the last four-and-twenty hours; then, what kind of ship would be the first to appear in sight, steamship or sailing-ship; and, if a sailing-ship, what rig and how many masts; and then, again, the Captain would think of a number, and the winner was he who came nearest it.

Now, strange to say, Mr. Marks won almost every prize, and yet not so very strange after all, for Mr. Marks was a professional gambler who made his living that way, travelling on the great steamships and making bets with all and sundry. The passengers didn't know that, but the Captain did.

One day Marks turned up in the second-class saloon and won £5 from a soft lad whose whole fortune was only £10 and a few odd shillings. Mr. Rorison came in, just in time to see what had happened. Rorison was on his way to the Samoan Islands as a missionary. He had been a famous student; he wrote Latin verses more easily than I write English prose, and read Greek for pleasure; he had taken first-class honours in mathematics, and nearly broke his professor's heart by refusing to go to Cambridge. I could say more, but you would think I was exaggerating. His father had died in debt many years before, but the son had paid up every farthing of it, with compound interest at five per cent., and having seen his two sisters happily married, and his young brother apprenticed to an honest trade, had settled a third of his salary on his mother, and was now on his way, joyfully, to do the work to which she had consecrated him from infancy. Yet not altogether joyfully, for Russell Rorison had had his trials and disappointments too. But he knew that his times were in God's hand, and that one day with Him is as a thousand years.

Marks was lifting the five pounds when Rorison came in. "Lay down that money," he cried out—for he had a temper at times—"lay it down, sir, and leave this instantly, or I'll make you."

I rather think he was disappointed when he saw the gambler lay the money down and go. I think he would have enjoyed "making" him do it, and I know I should.

That night at dinner, somehow or other, the conversation at the Captain's table turned on missionaries. The Captain had a budget of stories against them. Marks said there was no doubt it was a rare business for making money ; he had sometimes thought of becoming one himself. A third said that so far as he could make out they were, as a rule, men without a particle of common sense. "We have one of those gentry on board," said the Doctor, a medical man of three months' standing, who, as a student, had never had any standing. "We used to say," he said, "that only one prize had been taken by a man who became a missionary for twenty years."

"Well, I don't know what university you studied at," said Lacey Bee, a young officer of the Royal Engineers, "but that man Rorison knows more than the whole of us put together and multiplied ten times, and he's as modest as he's clever. There are papers of his in the Royal Society's Transactions that he wrote when he can't have been more than seventeen."

"My children like to play with him above anything," said the lady at the Captain's right hand.

"And he has got all the firemen but one to take the pledge," said the Engineer from an adjoining table, "and that's harder than writing papers for the Royal Society."

"I knew," said the Captain, "that he was often in the fo'castle, but I didn't know you let him down to the stoke-hole."

The conversation was resumed in the smoking-saloon, and there the Captain and Marks produced their best stories, any one of which (if only they had been true) would have proved that missionaries were indeed a bad set of men.

A few days afterwards there was the great sweepstakes of the voyage ; £10 for each subscriber, the winner to give one-fourth of the sum total to the Sailors' Widows and Orphans Society. Mr. Marks offered, as he had been unusually lucky in previous competitions, to take ten shares. " Well, it's a queer thing to do," said Lacey Bee, " but he's evidently a generous fellow after all."

There were thirty-eight subscribers, the Captain and officers standing out as it would hardly have been fair for them to try. The prize was to be for the best guess as to the *weight* of an albatross. The names, the money, and the guesses, were to be put in an envelope and sealed.

A magnificent bird had been following the ship for four days. It had been seen to rest in the water only once. After swimming for a minute or two, it rose up, and, stretching its neck, seemed to run on the water for eighty yards or so, striking it with its webbed feet, then it tucked up its legs, and floated in the air. It seemed to sail for hours almost with but one flap of its enormous wings. Its plumage was of a lovely white, though there were three or four black feathers in its wings. It was a wonderful sight when it turned its wings straight up and down. There never was such a picture of power and ease and grace.

The thirty-eight subscribers wrote out their guesses. They were to be handed to the Doctor before three o'clock. Several of them guessed a hundredweight; one guessed three cwts.; a lady wrote "just the same weight as myself"; and one man put a ton. (It was he who said missionaries had no common sense.) Mr. Marks put 23 lbs. The nearest to him was Lacey Bee; he put 60 lbs. After handing in his paper, he went to talk with Rorison. Rorison had been admiring the bird all day. Bee told him about the bets, and mentioned his own guess, the only one of course he knew. "I'm afraid you've overshot it," the missionary said; "feathers are pretty light, and its wings are just like ribands in width, and birds are made for floating in the air. 60 lbs. would be rather heavy."

"What would you guess?" said Bee.

"Let me think a moment. Well, I should say, less than half that—not more than 24 or 25 lbs. But I'm sorry to hear you are taking part in this; you are doing wrong."

"I daresay I am, but one doesn't like to be odd." Rorison had promised to write a letter for one of the sailors that day and had to go away forward.

Lacey Bee began to think. "I'm afraid," he said to himself, "this is a trick of Marks'. I'll have another shot!" So he wrote down another guess, enclosed £10, signed it "Russell Rorison," and gave it to the Doctor, saying, "Here's another subscription for you."

The big albatross was caught next day; a bit

of meat was put on a strong iron hook and fastened to a rope, and thrown overboard. The poor bird turned its wings, picked up the bait, and found it had been betrayed. The sailors hauled it in, hand over hand, as boys do with a giant kite; a few blows on the head killed it. Its wings were stretched out—16 feet from tip to tip. "Now boys, get it weighed." "23 lbs. 12 oz., sir," said the Cook. "Now we'll open the envelopes," said the Doctor.

There was a good deal of laughter as the guesses were read out; forced laughter rather, as they saw their money put aside in one heap. Mr. Marks' guess came very early. He was only 12 oz. off it, but no other body was within as many lbs. It seemed almost needless to open the envelopes, but the formality was gone through. Mr. Marks had really wonderful luck. The doctor had now come to the last three. "60 lbs., Lacey Bee"; whereupon Mr. Marks gave a sigh of relief. The next was the "ton" guess, at which Mr. Marks laughed immoderately. Then, last of all, "24 lbs. 7½ oz."

"That beats you, Mr. Marks, by half an ounce," cried Lacey Bee.

"Read the name," everybody cried.

"Russell Rorison," said the Doctor.

"I'll go for him," said Lacey Bee. On the way back he told him the little trick that he had played.

"Well," said the Doctor, "here's £480 for you; you've won, and I suppose you'll take it, filthy lucre though it be."

"Yes," said Rorison, "I'll take Mr. Marks' £100. The others will please take their money back, and I shall only keep the £100 till I find out who the rightful owners of it are, and whatever is unclaimed will go to the Sailors' Widows and Orphans."

Sir Arthur Cotton

When General Sir Arthur Cotton, of the Royal Engineers, one of the greatest benefactors that England has given India, was a young subaltern in Burma, he was invited to dinner by an officer. After dinner cards were produced and the lad was asked to play. He had often played at his father's house in Cheshire, though never for money, but as he was young, and the officer was a man of high standing, he took the invitation as a command, and played. When he rose from the table he had lost twenty pounds. His pay, of course, was very small, but he happened to have in his possession at the time that exact sum in bank-notes, sent to him by his father in a letter to buy some things he needed. For a moment or two, says his daughter, Lady Hope of Carriden, he could hardly realise the fact that every penny of his money had now to be handed over to his superior ; but so it was. It was a bitter trial to him, but he had learned his lesson, and vowed that from that hour he would never play cards again. That resolution he kept to his dying day. He could not bear the sight of cards in his house, and never allowed his children to play with them.

My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. So are the ways of everyone that is greedy of gain.

William Tyndale

TYNDALE, whose name I hope you have often heard and read about, was the first Englishman who translated the Holy Scriptures from the original Greek and Hebrew. His version of the New Testament was published in 1525, his Pentateuch in 1530. It is owing to him that the English of our Bible is at once so simple and so noble, for it was he who set the style that all his successors followed. We should thank God upon every remembrance of him, for we all owe him more than we know.

There is only one specimen of his handwriting known to be in existence. There is a facsimile of it in Mr. Demaus' Biography of Tyndale. It is in Latin, and was written while he was a prisoner in the Castle of Vilvorde in Belgium, in the winter of 1535. In it he asks the governor of the castle to try to let him have a warmer cap and a warmer coat, for the one he has is very thin. He would like also a woollen shirt that belonged to him, and a lamp at night, "for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark." But above all he entreats him to do his best to let him have his Hebrew Bible, Grammar, and Dictionary. "And in return," such are the solemn words with which he closes, "may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always it be consistent with the salvation of your soul. But, if before the end of the winter a different

decision be reached concerning me, I shall be patient, waiting on the will of God, to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, Whose Spirit I pray may ever direct your heart. Amen."

On October 6, 1536, he obtained the crown of martyrdom, being first strangled, and then burnt. His last recorded words, given in Foxe's Book of Martyrs, were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

ישוע הנצרי מלך היהודים

Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ

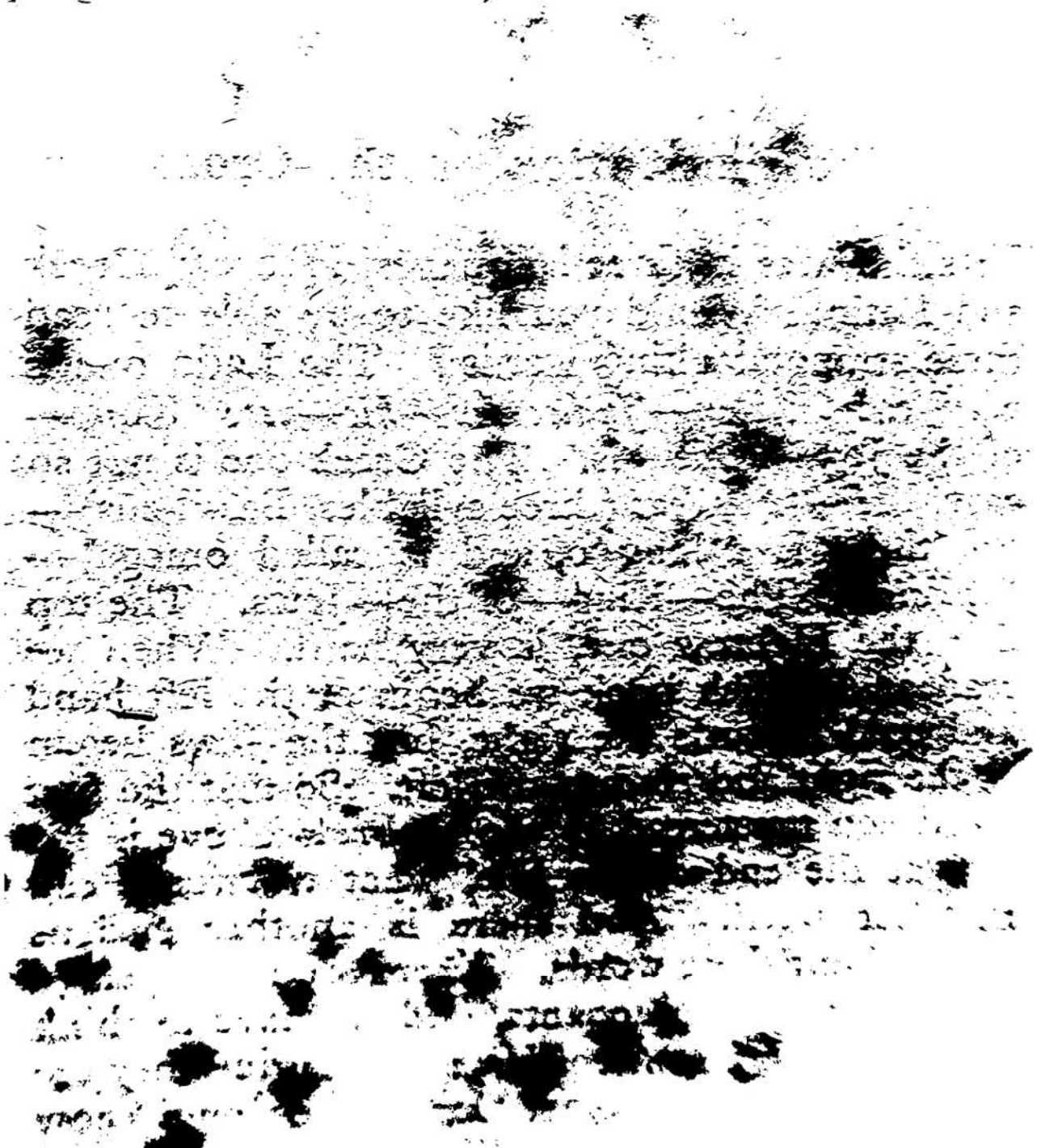
REX IVDAEORVM HIC EST

The Inscription on the Cross

The title was in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Would you like to be able to read these strange-looking words? The Latin one is very easy. *Rex—Judæorum—hic—est:* King—of the Jews—this—is. The Greek one is not so easy. *Ho—Basileus* (three syllables, Bas-il-eus)—*ton* (the o is a long o, and is called omega)—*Joudaion:* The—King—of the—Jews. The top line, the Hebrew one, is very hard. When we read an English book we begin at the left hand and read towards the right, but the Jews began at the right and read to the left. So that the first word you must read in the Hebrew above is the one at the end of the line, what we would call the last word. And there is another curious thing about these words. There are no vowels in them, but just consonants, and we have to think of the vowels in our minds, and imagine they are there, just as, if we saw 1st Dcmbr, we would know that was December. The line, then, would read

something like this—beginning, remember, at the last letter of the last word, and coming backwards : *Jeshua—hannatsri—melek—hai'hudim* (four syllables). Jesus—the Nazarene—King of —the Jews.

Now it is a fine thing to be able to read Christ's name in all these languages, but it is a far, far better thing to be able to say, Jesus, MY King !



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